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THE ROMAN EMPIRE

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ESSAYS ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY FROM THE ACCESSION OF DOMITIAN (81 A.D.) TO THE RETIREMENT OF NICEPHORUS III. (1081 A.D.)

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BY

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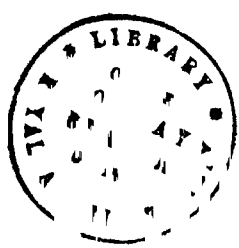

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PART I

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CHAPTER I

THE PRINCE, THE SENATE, AND THE CIVIL SERVICE IN THE EASTERN EMPIRE (400–550)

Immobility of the Classical State: Reign of Law.

§ 1. We approach the central problem of this entire period in an inquiry into the function and the aims of the Civil Service under the empire of the East. A supplementary inquiry might indeed discuss (*a*) the composition and dignities of the Byzantine Senate, and (*b*) the strict and well-defined provinces of the various civil departments. It was the chief endeavour of the princes in the era of reconstruction to assure the central control over all other branches of the administration. Constantine, while recognising the independent sanction of the Church, seeks to preserve its integrity and unanimous belief as a valid instrument of government in the new State. The profession of arms constituted a distinct career, and was open to the sturdy foreigner. The Civil Service, the special creature of the imperial system, looking to Hadrian and Severus Alexander as its chief patrons, was now still further reduced to order, method, and routine ; in the education and training of future officials, in the regular stipend, promotion, and pension, which followed and repaid devoted service in some field of the administration. It is often remarked that the classical ideal is a stationary rather than a progressive society. "That State," says Aristotle, "is the wisest and best administered

Immobility of the Classical State: Reign of Law.

which gives most to the Law and least to the personal will of the ruler." A religious sanction was invoked to secure legislation from the tampering interference of reformers; the legendary hero who produced the uniform and consistent code, was himself divine, or was at least inspired by a god. When the secular and critical spirit looked with cool inquiry on this pretension, Plato sought by religious fiction or dogmatic illusion to bind his neophytes to a blind obedience. In effect, every citizen is to be born in a Hellenic community with a rope round his neck, such as was worn by the proposer to deliver Salamis. The legislation of Rome opened and expanded from a narrow tribal code, under the genial influence of Imperial, Christian, Stoic, and Juristic doctrine. The Ecumenical State could repose safely on no other foundation but the law of nature and of reason; and it was a commonplace of the time (as of many subsequent schools of shallow enlightenment) that the two were identical. While we are following the restless wanderings of Hadrian, the ascetic musings of Marcus, the wild vagaries of Commodus, or the pitiless repression of Severus, we are apt to forget the quiet but systematic justification for the imperial system, which the Jurists proposed. The equity, which should be the basis of the world-wide State, as it realised the idle dream or academic thesis of dialectical and abstentionist Stoicism, was to be found under the empire, and was the unalterable pivot of the whole. Some indeed might regret the methods adopted to secure freedom and equality,—man's original condition, dictated by the powerful law of nature and the approving sanction of his own heart; or might regard the emperor as the unique means of attaining and preserving a "golden age." The content of this law was constant and inviolable, and could not be altered when once unfolded before mankind. To it the edicts of princes must conform, and there was abroad some

vague notion on the right of insurrection, in case the sovereign defied or contradicted it. The Declamations of the elder Seneca, and a hundred lesser passages in first century writers, extol this law of nature above the partial and transient enactment of princes or peoples. *Immobility of the Classical State: Reign of Law.*

§ 2. We must remember that the whole tendency of the reconstructive age (285–337) was to save the central power from alien encroachment and its own weakness. The ideal was not the will of the emperor for the time being, but the permanent and abiding policy of the State. Everything hitherto tentative and indecisive in outline, a compromise of intentional vagueness, was brought forth into open daylight and given sharply cut features, often rude, blunt, and unsuspected. The autocracy no longer depended upon Rome; why then should the empty and misleading pretence be maintained that from the Senate emanated all power in the State? The law was by then made clear and uniform; and the next three centuries will see the codifying process at work, which is to place the maxims and principles of government above the reach of individual caprice. Similarly, the agents of government were marshalled in order; the various characters and duties set forth in distinct relief, quite as much in the desire for swiftness and uniformity as in anxious apprehension. The Civil Service attains important proportions, and by a curious freak, the sworn ministers and lieutenants of Cæsar are summed up and collected, at least by the reign of Theodosius II., in the ancient and honourable title of Senators. Between the ancient house and the imperial agents there had always existed a standing feud; the aristocrat tended to become an irresponsible amateur, the prætor or lieutenant of Cæsar was careful and business-like as under the eye of the master. But the centrifugal force was now conquered; there is but one order of public servants, directly amenable to the emperor. *The Civil Service and routine.*

The Civil Service and routine.

We are dealing in this section only with the Civil Service of the Eastern realm; and we may here well start with this identification. These officers form a hierarchy with definite training, precise duties, and regular precedence; the Senate, still the informal council of assessors which custom rather than law bade the magistrate consult, was composed of the chief acting and past ministers of the Crown. And it was the aim and object of the reconstructive age in adapting the scheme of government to its new and unexpected needs, to make its method fixed and its procedure certain. This fixity of outline, as we saw, is a heritage from the past; the Hellenic idealists conceived it possible, like modern prophets of Utopia, to reach or to recur to a perfect and immobile condition of society, in which reform and improvement would have no further use. To us who recognise the helplessness of man's judgment before inexorable laws, and the cyclic development which forbids us to cherish hopes of an eternal equilibrium, it seems incredible that these Illyrian or Pannonian sovereigns, themselves darting out of nothingness into dazzling light, could have imagined that it lay within their competence to stereotype and to crystallise mankind. "A spirit of conservatism," says Finlay, "persuaded the legislators of the Roman Empire that its power could not decline, if each order and profession of its citizens was fixed irrevocably in the sphere of their own peculiar duties by hereditary succession." We are about to examine the application of this principle in the administrative sphere, and to inquire into the influence of this new body, as it slowly built up its policy and tradition to overmaster the moment's caprice in the ruler, or unhappily succumbed to the rudimentary instincts of self-seeking and greed.

Later decline of Civilian influence (600–800).

§ 3. The needs of the empire were twofold: domestic order and guard against foreign inroads. Sooner or later the most carefully devised plan for

securing civil supremacy was destined to fail. The artificially protected area, with its also artificial governing class (never, as in other countries, a dominant caste), frequently had to postpone internal reform to the pressing need of military defence. I am inclined to believe that the years 400–800, from Theodosius II. to Nicephorus I., witness the zenith and decline of the civilian spirit, of that predominance of the bureau, which the sturdy soldier Diocletian established, in the vain hope that unarmed and peaceful officials would remain always in dutiful obedience to the sovereign. I would suggest the following division of years in an attempt to estimate the vicissitudes of its influence.

Later decline of Civilian influence (600–800).

(*a*) From the New University of Theodosius II. to the end of Justinian (430–565), during which the collective Civil Service represented by the Senate, acquired by merit and preserved with success a commanding position in the State. (*b*) From Justin II. to the solemn compact of Heraclius (565–618). Here we see emerging the elements of opposition to the vigilant control of the prince,—the interest in most things civilian and the emoluments of the notary and the advocate have declined, and while society rushes blindly into superstition and barbarity, the advisers and agents of the sovereign do their best to thwart his well-meant reforms and exempt themselves (like a feudal "noblesse") from the uniform operation of law. (*c*) From Heraclius to the deposition of Justinian II. (618–695). Here the conflict of the official class with the monarchy takes a different complexion in an altered age; the old civil hierarchy breaks down, and in many regions of the empire becomes extinct; for since 618 two new and important factors have been admitted into partnership, with independent right, the Church and the Army: and the official class of "Senators" (persecuted, as Bury well says, in the "drastic but inept" measures of this latter sovereign) bear a different stamp to the

Later decline of Civilian influence (600–800).

disciplined agents of his greater namesake, and have something of the selfish independence of the feudal nobles, something, too, of the crafty greed of an Eastern vizier, not a little of the genuine (if misplaced) piety of the devotee. (*d*) From the elevation of Leontius to the accession of Leo III. (695–717); a period in which the permanent armies of Asia Minor combat not indeed with an effective monarch, but with the officials of the capital, who, like a Venetian oligarchy, attempt to engross political power and secrete their gains behind the majestic figure of a puppet Cæsar. (*e*) From the accession of Leo to the downfall of Irene, the epoch known as Iconoclastic and Isaurian (717–802). Here the personal monarchy of Constantine again emerges, and the civilian interest has to submit to military law; a "state of siege," as it were, is proclaimed, and sharper and sterner measures are adopted against the ascetic celibate and the corrupt functionary: it is the victory of the "Themes," of the army, and, above all, of the Asiatic spirit, which, assuming in distant Armenia the austere lineaments of ancient Rome, revives the falling State and ensures not only Byzantium but the rest of Europe; the civilian body dwindles in importance and esteem, the Senate deferentially ratifies the sovereign's decrees in formal "beds of justice"; the palace, the camp, the monastery are the centres of influence and interest.

Civilian pre-eminence in 5th century.

§ 4. We will confine ourselves at present to the first period (*c.* 430–565 A.D.), which owing to the remarkable change in the energy and fortunes of Justinian's old age might well be shortened by some dozen years. Here Senate and Emperor co-operate; the interest of ruler and subject are identical, and mature merit, passing through the useful lessons of a private lot, arrives leisurely and by no sudden leap at sovereign power. There is no definite anti-imperial feeling among the ruling class, though we detect dire presages of the coming conflict. For

the difficulty of our problem lies in this; we have abundant evidence of the wise influence, the continuous policy, the steady pre-eminence of the civilian element in the fifth century; and especially in the long and impersonal reign of Theodosius II. Yet we do not lack traces of selfishness in greater and minor agents alike, of the resentment roused by imperial firmness, of the claims of rank to exempt from liabilities. Now in the Roman Empire it is not possible to fall back upon the facile distinction between a military and feudal nobility, and the sovereign's agent expressly created to coerce them. Elsewhere we find the same political development; the king and his band bursting gaily into a rich and smiling country and dividing the spoils; the king, drawn over against himself into popular sympathies, curbing the petty tyrannies of the lords, and gradually (as Plato saw) assuming the character of a popular champion; hence the various offices invented to curtail local power in the common interest of prince and people, "comites" and "palatines" to watch "dukes"; "missi" and "gastald" to stand up for the centre against the circumference. But, in spite of the long survival and certain influence of great families in Greece and Rome—in spite of the dynastic tendency from the very outset underlying the scheme of Augustus—birth never constitutes by itself a claim to distinction or power among the classic nations. Nobility was of rank not of blood; and although nature will again and again "recur" to combat or reinforce civic Idealism, the theory survives to the end of our period that only standing in the service of the State gave rank, title, or precedence. Thus we have some of that Teutonic subjectivity, the feudal baron, sometimes the defender, sometimes the oppressor of the district; and the commonwealth never surrendered a large measure of its duties to private enterprise. (For, in passing, it may be explained why England is to the present

Civilian pre-eminence in V^th century.

Civilian pre-eminence in V^th century.

moment an *aristocratic* country: it is because a very great part of the duties elsewhere exercised by paid functionaries of the centre fall to the gratuitous discharge of those whose birth summons them to certain office and functions; who are trained in that anomalous yet successful school of English education to be the natural leaders of a great community, or the impartial rulers of less civilised races. Elsewhere we have intimated that the attitude of such a class is always largely hostile to the government and loyal to the titular sovereign; for it cares little for the favours of the former, and for its standard of public rectitude and devotion it borrows nothing of its tradition, invokes none of its definite laws; but it values the lightest honour which the latter bestows, an ample reward; lastly, it depends, as the nobility must in modern times, upon the esteem of the people at large, also animated by a general feeling of distrust of those anonymous central cabinets where power resides to-day, and by a vague terror of State autocracy, never so dangerous as when cloaked under democratic forms.) To the bad and to the good side of feudalism alike the empire was a stranger. The State was *impersonal;* subjectivity was ruthlessly crushed or forced in the imperial figures to act an impersonal rôle. It was constantly attempting to reduce independent departments under the central sway; Diocletian did not rest until he had secured the submission of army and administration to the central unit, which, like Schelling's Absolute, was at the same moment *both* and *neither*. It would be an error to assert that the system strove for logical symmetry like a modern paper constitution. But it developed, as do all ideal (that is, artificial) systems, into centralism and uniformity. And indeed there had never been any doubt of this; though office might come, like Santa Claus, in the night to the cradles of slumbering politicians, yet in the end it was office, not the accident of birth, that bestowed

power and admittance to the Senate. When we find some notable fretting against restraint or common justice, some boasted or claimed immunity, it is no feudal peer; it is a creature of the State who has become, like the "monster," stronger than its author.

Civilian pre-eminence in V^th century.

§ 5. The Civil Service of China is examined but is not taught by the State; the growth and early training are spontaneous, and only the mature result is taken under its patronage. In Byzantium since the reign of Theodosius II. there existed a college for the discipline of future officials (Cod. Theo., xiv. 9, 3; Just., xi. 18, 1).

The Theodosian academy for officials: function of the Senate.

A high test of merit and ability was exacted for a professor's post; the "Senate" were the examiners; and the lucky candidate might expect, after a certain term of service, to enter the official hierarchy with the title of Count. It is to us not a little singular to see an "emeritus" professor from Germany in the habiliments of a Privy Councillor, or an honorary Court Chamberlain; but such recognition by the monarch, acting in the name of the State, is quite in keeping with Roman practice and tradition. We may well believe that the Senate as an advisory as well as an examining body possessed large powers in the reign of Pulcheria. In spite of the charges of Eunapius that offices were venal, it is clear that assembly and executive worked well together; and that the constitution under an amiable hereditary prince, a conscientious empress sister, and a competent imperial council, resembled later and better forms of that absolutism which supplanted Feudalism and disorder in Western Europe. Bury well points out that the early empire steered a doubtful course between Scylla and Charybdis—a cabinet of imperial freedmen, Dio's καισαρεῖοι, and a sheer military despotism. Remedies for each peril were discovered in (*a*) permanent council and Civil Service; (*b*) severance of the civil and military careers. But the

The Theodosian academy for officials: function of the Senate.

double danger recurred in a novel form—the new cabinet of chamberlains and dependents of the Constantinian Court, and the foreign and preponderating element in the armies. It is impossible not to forecast the secret influences of "aulic cabals." Yet as the earlier princes charged with the responsible government of a world found it necessary to put trust in faithful domestics, so the later influence of the Court Chamberlain, however distasteful to the patriot and the civilian, had some intelligible ground. For the most public-spirited assembly insensibly alters its tone, and acquires features of individual avarice and collective resistance to all change however urgent. The tone of civilian society is not the same under Anastasius as under Theodosius II. Now and again the "Senate" appears by name in some more important relation than a court ceremony. It seems to have disappointed the hopes of Verina, who in 475 drove out her son-in-law to place her paramour Patricius on the throne; it elevated her brother Basiliscus, the unsuccessful admiral of the great expedition to Carthage. Longinus, Zeno's brother, is appointed president of the council to reinforce the Isaurian counterpoise to the German auxiliaries. And when Anastasius has overcome the peril arising from this dangerous alliance in the Isaurian mutiny, it is once more the Senate who proclaim Vitalian an enemy of the State. He is no "breaker of the king's peace," no "comforter of the king's enemies," but ἀλλότριος τῆς πολιτείας, a foe to the just and impersonal system of the City State. Once again it is the Senate who inquire into the conspiracy in Justinian's last days, when, with the leniency we come to expect in an emperor, all who seem guilty are pardoned and set free. It is clear, then, that Justinian gave it a *judicial* function, which may have lasted or been from time to time revived down to the final abrogation of privilege in the latter half of the ninth century.

§ 6. Where earlier critics saw nothing but unmistakable decay under feeble and capricious princes, modern research has disclosed manifest tokens of recuperation and steadfast policy. Finlay, as he struggles between his evidence and his intuitions, presents no very clear picture, and is constantly impaling himself on the horns of a dilemma; yet he does justice to the "systematic exercise of imperial power," the identical interest and common aim of sovereign and subject, and the gradual internal recovery which followed the clear decision of the Eastern world to tolerate no Teutonic protectorate.

Respect for precedent: autocracy suspicious of itself.

All these princes seek to follow precedent dutifully; and Anastasius is in singular agreement with Tiberius I. (Cod. J., i. 22, 6), when he writes to the governors and judges not to allow a private rescript to override the law; the imperial will may be disregarded if it does not tally with usage. Tiberius, it will be remembered, had likewise attempted to guard autocracy against its idler or incautious moments: "*minui* jura quotiens gliscat potestas, nec utendum arbitrio cum de legibus agi possit." Where shall we find the true critic of an often faulty executive, an often hasty legislature? The emperor is warring against himself; he is attempting to guard against abuse of prerogative by an exercise of it. In the United States, the Constitution is sovereign over popular impulse; the Supreme Court decides if a measure is consistent with its provisions. It is the standing complaint of liberal historians that no such safeguard or division of function existed in the empire; that the executive and legislature and judicature were often at one; that the private subject had no redress in the courts against oppression; that the governor was also judge in his own cause. It is not easy to see how this system could be successfully amended while retaining the hypothesis and formula of the Commonwealth: for this paradox was essential, that which combined with a minute

Respect for precedent: autocracy suspicious of itself.

subdivision of labour and function the most imperious centralism. During an epoch of comparative peace a respectable civilian body may safely be charged with imperial duties; but at a crisis, the single will and its trusty military retinue must be once more invoked. Such a period of civil rule marks the fifth century,—marks again the latter portion of the sixth. There was no initiative, and for the moment no need of initiative, in the Emperor Theodosius II. The machine could go on very well of itself. There was abroad an honest desire to reform, retrench, and rule wisely. The groundwork and stability of the next reigns—Marcian, Leo, Zeno, Anastasius, and Justin—were laid firmly under the last of the Dynastic series. If the emperor was weak or "constitutional," the Senate, a permanent body with continuous traditions, assumed the control of public business. Of the sovereigns who succeeded Theodosius (450–578) no less than six hail from those northern parts of the Balkan peninsula which for centuries supplied Rome not merely with recruits but with an unbroken line of princes. Whether Illyricum or Pannonia, Dardania or Thrace, it is remarkable that for over three and a quarter centuries (250–578) these provinces should have so exclusively provided rulers for the world. It cannot be doubted that Marcian (450–457), in whose nomination Pulcheria, Aspar, and the Senate seem to unite amicably, was a notable member of that body, who supported under the last reign the prudent policy that lay behind the fugitive personality of her brother. The chief aim of this policy was to enthrone law above caprice, to circumscribe despotic or fitful power by fixed institutions and uniform procedure; the motto of these sagacious civilians might well be the Horatian advice to the playwright, *Nec deus intersit.*

§ 7. It is scarcely out of place to remark that there is a similar tendency even among the professed sup-

The Russian Tzardom: its limitations.

porters of modern autocracy. We cannot forget the apology which the late M. Pobyedonostseff made for his sovereign in the matter of the Kieff affair. Prince Kropotkin had with much waste of sentimentality objected to students being sent into the army as a disciplinary measure; a measure just suited to the young Russian, which with us would take the form of sending a spoilt and precocious boy to learn his place in a public school. For this step the Procurator makes a really needless apology. But when it comes to placing the responsibility, he is, as Tacitus would say, "sounding the depths and publishing the secrets of empire." The emperor was not responsible, it appears; the action was taken solely by the Ministers of the Interior and of Education. "The decree," he writes, "concerning the military service of disorderly students was published independently of any initiative on the part of the emperor. The ministers in a cabinet meeting, summoned in consequence of these university disorders, deemed it necessary to have recourse to this punishment, and this resolution was submitted for the emperor's approval. The application of this penalty in each case was to depend on a special committee . . . and its decisions were to be valid in law without needing an imperial sanction. The Kieff affair was settled in this way, and the will of the emperor had no share in it. . . . *It should be remembered that our emperor never issues such orders on his personal responsibility. He contents himself with confirming the decisions of the various executive councils and the resolutions of his ministers in cases prescribed by rule.* . . . I was totally ignorant of the Kieff affair, which concerned two ministers." This must mean that the emperor, like the ideal sovereign of Laurentius, only confirms the decisions of his cabinet, and is not responsible for their mistakes. We need not sympathise with the pacificist scruples of the prince about the drafting of disorderly youths into a sphere of much-needed discipline; nor do we

The Russian Czardom: its limitations.

exactly agree with him in seeing here the embryo of constitutional government and responsible ministries! Indeed, the above seems the very worst system of government the heart of man could devise! The autocrat is powerless, although in the eyes of the world solely accountable for every slip or misdeed. The ministers, so far from being responsible either to him or to the nation, are practically omnipotent in their several departments; and do not even trouble to consult the sovereign, although he has to bear the brunt or odium of their injustice. And, like the official class in our period, "they increasingly assume the right *under the shelter of the emperor's signature*, of modifying by mere decrees the fundamental laws of the empire." But at Byzantium, we notice the better features only. The age might well be regarded as the triumph of bureaucratic government. The dignified assembly was well served by trained and organised officials who had learned not merely general lessons in the Theodosian academy, but the minute duties of their future career. Nor is it without significance that just at this time appears the Code as a further support to a just and uniform administration, of which Finlay well remarks, "that it afforded the people the means of arraigning the conduct of the ruler before the fixed principles of law."

Efforts to control the lesser agents (450–500).

§ 8. The legislation of the time bears ample witness to a sincere desire for the reform of abuses in the higher circles, to the prevalence of an unscrupulous or antinomian spirit in the lesser agents. Marcian found himself besieged by complaints, "*catervas adeuntium infinitas*," of the imperfect distribution of justice; the judges were neither strict nor impartial (Novella, i.). There was complete accord between the elderly Senator, called like some Doge of Venice to be chief among his peers, and the conclave who had ratified or proposed his election. No fault was found in the pompous phrases in which he couched

his sense of imperial responsibility: "*Curæ nobis est utilitati humani generis providere*" (Novella, ii.). He remits the *follis*, as somewhat later Anastasius will abolish the *Chrysargyron*, beyond chance of recall; and thus relieved the senatorial class from a heavy burden, which even the emperor himself paid as a member of the order: for the modern gulf between the sovereign and the proudest subject, which is a symbol of State absolutism, did not exist for the Roman emperor. He also lightened those *liturgical* offices, like that of the Greek *Choragus* or our own High Sheriff, which subjected wealth to certain liabilities for the people's amusement: hitherto Senators of the provinces were called up to act as prætors in the capital and provide games for an idle proletariat. The two original prætors of the city had been increased to eight, all bound to some costly contribution to public works or public ceremonies; for the ancient world, in spite of (or shall we say because of?) its plutocratic basis, exacted much from the opulent, and had no patience with the cynical luxury, the immunity and aloofness of the wealthy which is so significant a trait of "democratic" States. Marcian no doubt reduced the number of exhibitions, and he refused to summon from a remote district a rich proprietor to squander his means on a people who scarcely knew his name. Residents alone were in future eligible to these onerous and archaic posts; and the consuls were invited to share with the prætors the charge of the public works and buildings, which had pressed heavily on those who were not required for the less useful expense of the games. Leo I., following the same wise policy of simplicity and retrenchment, reduced these ceremonious offices to three; and Justinian completed the work of relief in the abolition of the consulate. This act, idly supposed to mark an ignoble jealousy of antique Roman glory, seems to the dispassionate student to have been dictated by

Efforts to control the lesser agents (450–500).

Efforts to control the lesser agents (450–500).

the soundest motives. Emperor and State were quit of a dignity which entailed nothing but a convenience for the chronicler and a disorderly "*largess*"; to the mass of the people indeed the term ὑπατεία, robbed of its proud associations, bore no other significance, and we do not hear that even the usual rumblings of discontent "*inani murmure ademptum jus questus*," follows this revolutionary economy. Zeno (474–491) maintained the same attitude; like Leo the Thracian, he lightened fiscal burdens in the interest of the landed proprietor; and the preoccupation of their sovereigns with this class is not a little significant of the critical position of agriculture and of economics. It is hazarded that his dependence on the "official aristocracy" is proved by his refusal to nominate his brother Longinus as successor; it may well be that both emperor and Senate had already come to the same conclusion that he was unfit to rule; for he had for several years occupied the chair of President of that Assembly.

Wise influence of senior officials in Senate.

The abolition of the *Chrysargyron* and the curious approval aroused will demand special notice. We need only note here the consistent policy of moderation and economy shown alike, no doubt under senatorial guidance, by the elderly palace official from Dyrrhachium and the mature Guardsman, who succeeded an Isaurian chieftain as Roman emperors. It must be remarked that this imperial council enabled princes, chosen almost at hazard, to play a useful and dignified part without any previous special training; it respected precedent and maintained a continuous and unbroken policy. Yet in justice to these conscientious rulers, who availed themselves of their advice, the more liberal and beneficial measures were owed to the independent thought of the sovereign himself. A wise suppression of sinecures also marked this era, and a restriction of the excessive influence of certain high offices.

We do not know how far these civil reforms were due to the spontaneous action of the monarch; but we are well aware how this judicious retrenchment was viewed in the prejudiced eyes of Laurentius or Procopius. Amid vague blame or overt calumnies, the genuine desire of the emperors (including Justinian) for a wise check on public expenditure is clearly marked. The unavailing regrets of the Lydian for the past glories of the prefect's office and retinue, mark not the jealous suppression by the monarch of an inconvenient partner or rival, but rather a natural process, which extinguished with the litigious centralism of the courts of the capital the effective *civilian* control of the outlying provinces. The Civil Service indeed has passed its palmiest days. It is subject to an insensible decline, for which no single actor is responsible. The Senate, when we open the records of the next period, does not reflect high public spirit, a sense of duty, a corporate tradition. The "princes" of the Court of Justin II. are stigmatised by him as selfish placemen and dangerous advisers, against whose influence he warns his successor. By what gradual and silent steps this transformation was effected we do not know; but we may safely infer that the change was hastened by the despondent lethargy which overtook Justinian in his later years.

Wise influence of senior officials in Senate.

§ 9. The marvel of the endurance and stability of the Eastern realm has fascinated historians. To what can we ascribe the startling contrast in the fortunes of the two capitals? It has been well said: "While the West crumbled, the East saved not itself only but the world." These adoptive emperors organised that system, which being hastily dismissed as Byzantine, has been so "unjustly calumniated." The successors of Diocletian coquetted with his scheme; but the real consummation was reserved for the princes who follow the extinction of the Theodosian house. Constantine introduced

Official responsibility.

Official responsibility.

heredity and favoured the barbarians; the elder Theodosius endorsed this policy, and left behind him a working scheme which the feeble stubbornness of his son, or the intrigues of ministers, soon destroyed. At the best, the Roman constitution in the fifth century is incoherent and opportunist; a definite system was the merit of the immediate predecessors of the great Justinian. They laboured for that State or centre-supremacy which was achieved under his energetic rule, and vanished in his lethargy. Officers of the civil and military hierarchy were made amenable to "ministerial departments," and thus ultimately all depended on the sovereign, according to the fixed principle of modern times. The sovereign was safe and inaccessible. The treasure was guarded against peculation. Conspiracy, rebellion, theft—such are the dangers of a feudal society; to a large extent pretexts and opportunities for these crimes against public peace were withdrawn.

No demand for popular control.

Finlay, as becomes a Grecian liberator, indicts the Byzantine Government for not placing some effective safeguard in the hands of the people against the malversation or petty oppression of subalterns. He is convinced that in the highest class the public opinion was wholesome, and the Senate in its aims and methods patriotic; the "Illyrian" emperors whom they supported, vigorous and well-meaning. But a vigilant watch over the obscurer instruments of the "sacred will and pleasure" was impossible. And in spite of murmurs, it would not appear that the people at large demanded control; and still the overworked princes struggled in vain with an Atlantean load. He well says that "legislative, executive, and administrative powers of government were confounded as well as concentrated in the person of the sovereign"; and he remarks with justice that "despotism can ill balance the various powers of the State, and is but ill qualified to study with effect and sympathy the condition of the governed or the

disorders of society." But these strictures of nineteenth-century liberalism do not suggest any genuine alternative to the imperial policy. The whole culture and ability of the empire was cleverly gathered together on the side of the government; and there is no sign whatever of a strong or sullen country opposition, such as silently thwarted the Whig administration in our own land during the early Hanoverian reigns. To us who have before our eyes the experience and the lessons of the post-reformation development in the field of politics, it seems a truism to assert that it is a profound error (1) to accumulate the wealth of a country in the coffers of a State (as Constantius Chlorus wisely (Dio C. *contin.*): ἄμεινον παρὰ τοῖς ἰδιώταις τὴν τοῦ βασίλεως εὐπορίαν εἶναι ἢ μικρῷ περικεκλεῖσθαι χωρίῳ); or (2) to concentrate power without counterpoise and balance elsewhere. The best feature in the doubtful success of modern Representation, has been the serious character and responsibility of the recognised Opposition, of those critics of a ministry whose work and function they may at any moment be called upon to undertake. But in the fifth century such a method of securing the people against their petty tyrants was inconceivable; and the sole remedy appeared to be to aggrandise the central prerogative, as alone equitable and impartial. We praise the attempts of these sovereigns, from Marcian to Justin I., to control autocracy and supply the final will in the State with ample precedent and guiding lines not to be overstepped without danger. It would have been idle to have then suggested to a statesman or a Senator to elevate a Supreme Tribunal (as in the United States) over the executive and legislative powers. There is little sign that the artificial system known as the Roman Empire possessed outside the church and clergy a body of independent opinion with fixed principles which would act in this manner. And it would have seemed a cowardly shifting of responsibility

No demand for popular control.

No demand for popular control.

for a prince to advocate such a curtailment of his own authority as to render impersonal law wholly superior to the will of the sovereign and the needs and crises of the State! So far as it was possible (as we have seen) the emperors of the sturdy Illyrian line desired to simplify and to regularise; the codes of Theodosius II. and of Justinian were in a sense a kind of constitutional guarantee. Indeed, like Severus I., the prince frequently professed his obedience to law and his deference to custom and tradition; but the attempt was never made to reduce government to a faultless and mechanical procedure irrespective of personal vigilance, or to relieve the elected ruler of the ultimate duty of deciding on the best course. The widow-woman was right; if the emperor refused to hear her complaint she could retort with justice, Μὴ βασίλευε.

Public opinion and nationality unknown.

§ 10. The modern critic is not to blame in laying down such general maxims as these: "Patriotism and political honesty can only become national virtues when the people possess a control over the conduct of their rulers, and when the rulers themselves publicly announce their political principles." But the emphasis of this sentence, quite unsuspected by its author, lies in the word "national." Now the East has never made nationality the basis of public institutions; and there is no indication in our period of any genuine and homogeneous opinion, representing that sentiment for country and tradition, which we term patriotism. It would seem that the empire, like the Russian autocracy to-day, held together and gave a precarious and artificial unity, to a curious assortment of interests and to a medley of creeds. It will always be debated on this side and on that, whether a beneficent hegemony is better than the restless strife and wrangle of small autonomous districts. Here we have hope, disorder, and development; there assured comfort and a stationary, perhaps

a petrified society. Modern Utopias, often without suspecting their sympathy with archaic ideals, again reinstate the latter conception; and the States-General of Europe, or the more poetical "Federation of Mankind," really revert in theory to the Roman Empire, pagan or mediæval, seamless, one and indivisible. But this conception, which shall stop the blind strife of democracies and abolish the competition of trade, is strongly anti-national, as the imperial system was supra-national. The true tendency of democratic States is to be seen in the protectionist colonies or commonwealths of the Anglo-Saxons, with their permanent or spasmodic "Xenelasia," or in the curious hesitation which admits pauper aliens into England and yet finds an apology for the anti-Chinese or anti-Japanese campaign; such, for instance, as lately issued in riot and bloodshed on the west coast of America; in republic and monarchy alike. The spirit of nationality, indeed, is not liberalism, but its negation; and we term the empire liberal because it kept before the eyes of warring sects and heresies, of disaffected yet helpless provinces, the ideal of a larger Unity, and did its best to break down the barriers of race, district, and creed. We may say that the codes realised one condition of sound rule laid down above by our critical historian; the general lines of policy and administration were made public; and as regards the first, we cannot in fairness ask that greater confidence should be displayed than is shown by Emperor Justin II., who desires the chief men and clergy of a province to help in choosing their governor.. The critic stands on more secure ground when he accuses not the rulers but the unseen tendencies of the age, both physical and economic. If the welfare and freedom of a country depend, as we may readily admit, upon its middle class, thrifty, industrious, and proprietary, it must be confessed that the Eastern realm was in a parlous state. "The

Public opinion and nationality unknown.

The middle-class and the mercantile interest.

The middle-class and the mercantile interest.

State," says Hegel (*Ph. d. R.*, 297), "if it has no middle class is still at a low stage of development. In Russia, for instance, there is a multitude of serfs and a host of rulers. It is of great concern to the State that a middle class should be formed." "The middle and upper classes of Society," says Finlay, "were so reduced in numbers that their influence was almost nugatory in the scale of civilisation." We approach here a problem alike of ancient and modern times, the blame of which cannot be set down to the errors or the absence of human interference. Natural causes and voluntary surrender of rights changed mediæval Europe from a federation of free towns, gathered into peace under a just hegemony, into a vast and desolate country-side, peopled by petty sovereigns and serfs. It was nobody's fault. Natural causes again press out to-day the small proprietor, the yeoman, and the petty salesman; and once more seem to divide society into the two halves, the trust (or the government) and its dependents. The decay of the intermediate rungs in the social ladder cannot then be laid at the door of this oligarchic autocracy, which reduced the burdens of the middle class and sought to include even the "powerful" within the control of law. Indeed, we are tempted to suppose that, in spite of fiscal exaction, the Byzantine monarchy was throughout its history supported by the goodwill of a silent but influential mercantile class; such as in the end directs most civilised policies, under all kinds of vague and indifferent formulæ of government.

We have somehow to account for the vitality and recuperative powers shown by the Eastern empire. Pillaged by Persian and Saracen, drained by the monastic system, impoverished by erroneous if well-meant finance—it rose again and again into opulence, such as drew upon it the envious and greedy eyes of successive invaders. If Octavianus was largely indebted to the knightly class for his triumph, his

heirs never forgot this sage alliance. The stability of the realm and its government depends on its satisfying the conditions of mercantile exchange; it guarded property, it kept clear the lines of intercourse between the various centres of traffic, and it patrolled the seas; nor do I conceive that the emphatic words of Constantine VII. are *wholly* a piece of archaic pedantry or conceit, when he tells us that the Byzantine ruler is master of the sea to the Pillars of Hercules.

Oligarchy under formula of Absolutism.

§ 11. Thus in this age the constitution tends through a wise oligarchy to the forms of absolutism. And this implies, not caprice but routine; not perpetual recurrence to a personal will, but a very infrequent appeal. A civilised State is in the fetters of tradition and usage; it defers needlessly to precedent. For in spite of the stirrings of advanced thinkers and noisy politicians, the inert and conservative mass of the people enter into a semblance of power only to stereotype the conventional. Under Justinian, the prince as representing the State, mature and sagacious, maintained control over all departments—the military leaders, the civil administrators, and the clergy. After the African disaster under Basiliscus (whose very failure or treason, as elsewhere in Byzantine annals, made him seem worthy of a throne!) nothing venturesome was attempted for more than fifty years; efforts were directed solely to domestic reform down to the memorable "Nika" riots, which closed the door on the classic period and confirmed the monarch in his bold forward policy and his stern measures of repression. There was to be no repetition of that dramatic scene of aged and apologetic royalty, when Anastasius sat discrowned waiting for the people's verdict. In spite of the odd incident of Vitalian's rebellion, order and system had been introduced into the State; in the subordinate ranks of government, discipline; in the treasury, wealth; in the highest and most responsible circle, wise

Careful training for the Bureaux: State-service the sole career.

measures and consistent schemes. The training and the functions of the various grades had been specialised. State-service was not an episode in the ordinary life of a citizen; but an engrossing profession which demanded expert skill. The very deftness of the adept needed for the intricate details was fatal to any claim for popular control. The emperor's Council represented a Universal, of which the several parts, isolated in their local interests, could form no conception. Nothing could well be conceived more antithetic to the demands of democracy than this government by the expert. Hegel derides this vain claim for personal intervention: "Another assumption (*Ph. d. R.*, 308) found in the prevalent idea that all should have a share in the business of State, is that all understand this business. This is as absurd as it is widespread—despite its absurdity." Once more (315): "There is widely current the notion that everybody knows already what is good for the State; and that this general knowledge is merely given voice and expression in a State-assembly. But indeed the very reverse is the case." The Byzantine bureaux were as carefully organised as the legal profession to-day. The empire depended upon the employment of tried and trained ability; and stood opposed to the Oriental despotism, where the influence of favourites, slaves, and aliens is superior to native forces. To this constant tradition and discipline it owed the singular duration and recuperative power which it so strikingly displays. A modern parallel might indeed be found in the Roman priesthood. Taken at an early age from the middle and lower classes of society, they are imbued with a systematic educational tradition, a tested and final system of dogma and philosophy, and just that supranational spirit and sympathy which unites them as a corporation in an allegiance other than that which birth or country supplies. Neither system is easily adaptable to novel conditions of society. A

bureaucracy is almost incapable of reforming itself; and the venal stagnation of an official class is perhaps a heavy price to pay for public order. When it is boasted that the singular merit lies in the supremacy of system to capricious will, it is forgotten that in human history the impulse to reform is nearly always supplied by a St. John Baptist, not by a privileged corporation. The world-spirit stirs first the individual conscience, the *Gemeinde* only through it. The record of imperial governments, from Rome to modern China or Russia, is often the story of unavailing personal effort, against respectful but stubborn officialism. The supremacy of law, which is to secure the subject against the arbitrary exercise of the central power, may sometimes become identified with the interest of a class. It is the tendency of long-dominant bodies to identify and to confuse in all good faith their own welfare with the general good. Nothing is gained by recognising the formal proposition, that law should be superior to the executive, or to the momentary wishes of the prince, unless we constantly analyse and examine suspiciously what we imply by law. This dignified term may not seldom connote a thoroughly obsolete code, or the stealthy manipulation of general maxims for private ends. The supremacy of law, devised as a remedy against disorder and oppression, may become on occasion the chief hindrance to much-needed reform. The Roman Government drew to itself and took under its patronage all that was anywhere excellent; it admitted of no rival; everything must enter into its magic circle and serve its end, or perish. When the pagan crusade against the Church failed, uncompromising hostility gave place at once to imperial favour and trust. The elements that could not be overcome must be absorbed or assimilated. There was no independent or semi-feudal nobility to criticise or to thwart. All titles of nobility were official. Outside the service of the

Careful training for the Bureaux: State-service the sole career.

Careful training for the Bureaux: State-service the sole career.

Commonwealth, there was no calling open to ambition or to merit; it was part of the imperial system to see that this was the case. The cultivated ranks of society were bound to the system by every sentiment of sympathy and self-interest. It has been well said that the Byzantine bureaucracy formed rather a "distinct nation than a privileged class"; and it is no wonder if the inheritors of great traditions and a culture then unique should have believed that the safety of the whole was bound up in their corporate prestige or individual comfort. So in later times, when the palace has engrossed or engulfed every minor rivulet, the careful maintenance of State-ceremony will appear a "divine science"; and like the preservation of exact ritual and formula in a primitive tribe, this "liturgy" will seem the mysterious and imperishable secret or palladium of the public welfare.[1]

Venality of office: its excuse.

§ 12. "Formerly in France," says Hegel (*Ph. d. R.*, 277), "seats in Parliament were saleable, and this is still the case with army officers' positions in the English army below a certain grade. These facts depended or depend upon the *mediæval* Constitution of certain States, and are now gradually disappearing." I am not here concerned with the accuracy or the scope of this remark; I am using his phrase as a suitable opening to a short inquiry into the *venality* of office. It is clear that such a system has not excited in the past, even in civilised societies, the odium and contumely directed against its still surviving vestiges to-day. The most curious and frank provisions are to be found in the code for the payment to the Emperor Justinian or to his consort a fee on entering office.[2]

Now the horror excited even by the suspicion of paying rather than receiving money for official

[1] *Lyd.*, ii. 13; *C. Theod.*, vi. 5; *C. Just.*, xii. 8: ut dignitatum ordo servetur.

[2] *Cod. Just.*, i. 27, 1, 2; *Cod. Just.*, xii. 24, 7.

rank is amusingly strong with us to-day; but it must not lead us wilfully to distort the past or to hold up pious hands of protesting innocence. The sum demanded might be regarded as a preliminary deposit, a guarantee of good faith and competence, a fee on registration or institution, such as with our sensitive yet easily cajoled conscience conceals much the same practice to-day. A company rightly demands that a director shall have a certain stake in the enterprise he controls; and one reads without alarm the judicious warning that the holding of a prescribed number of shares qualifies for a seat at the directoral board. Yet put in another form, all sorts of respectable scruples would be aroused, if it were to be publicly announced that these places could be purchased. As regards political rather than mercantile dignities, it is only the voluntary blindness of the puritan ostrich that can fail to detect a close parallel in modern times, and in a State justly renowned for high morality and sense of honour in its public life. Yet we indulgently tolerate the purchase of official rank and that very real political and social influence which a peerage conveys. It should indeed be noticed, in further extenuation of the ancient practice, that there is no pretence to-day that the State has benefited by the lavish contribution to the party-chest; it is cynically acknowledged that the money has been subscribed to add the sinews of war to a faction, which for the time may stand for the nation, but at no given moment is strictly representative of anything but itself. And it must be candidly stated that, however harmlessly such a recognised venality of title may operate in practice, it is a serious menace to the genuinely representative character of the sovereign, who is thus compelled by custom to confer honours not for national but for factious and factitious services, and to recruit the "senatorial" order only from the ranks of prejudice and party. It may be hoped that in the not unlikely enlargement of the

Venality of office: its excuse.

Legal fiction of Simony.

direct and personal sphere of monarchy, some safeguard will be devised for the precious independence of the sovereign; since it stands above party, and is not merely the spokesman, but also the best judge of general good. The same lamentable puritanic confusion of thought has opened one form of practice in ecclesiastical matters to universal obloquy, while retaining another unnoticed. It is in vain that the purist or the logician proves that the sin of *simony* can strictly be committed only by a prospective member of the episcopal bench, who has to deposit certain moneys before the State will authorise consecration. It is clear that in this case such payment is the indispensable condition, or at least preliminary, before receiving a spiritual gift. No such stigma can possibly attach to the purchaser of an advowson-right with the intention of presenting himself to the bishop on a vacancy. A benefice is not a spiritual gift, and no spiritual gift is purchased. No limit whatever is put upon the judgment and discretion of the diocesan. Only a right is conveyed to exercise a function (presumed to be already valid), subject to a prelate's sanction and institution, in a particular district. The term simony (a legal fiction which has imposed on many candid minds) has no application in such a case. As in other instances, an office is venal, and no doubt in a sphere where such a premium on wealth ought not to exist; but the opponents of clerical patronage, one safeguard at least against over-centralisation, should be careful to discover the really weak parts in the harness, and refrain from setting up imaginary crimes to tilt against.

Modern conception: 'place of profit.'

The modern conception of office is in its very nature antagonistic to this practice. The tendency of political reform is on the surface towards a somewhat watery democracy, but beneath the current sets strongly towards State-monopoly. There is a certain prejudice or suspicion abroad against unpaid officials who render gratuitous service, because such duties

seem the natural outcome and fitting responsibility of their social position. Of such independent rivals the State is jealous, as of a relic of bygone feudalism; but it is apt to forget that this conception of unpaid service as a citizen's duty is also an integral notion in the purest forms of republic. The regimen of Justinian suffered from exactly the same faults as any modern centralised constitution. The sole paymaster was the State; and in a public career opened the unique vista to the aspirant. Hegel is at one with the Byzantine rulers and with modern centralism when he says (*Ph. d. R.*, 294): "The State cannot rely upon service which is capricious and voluntary; such, for instance, as the administration of justice by knights-errant." But something of the spontaneous, it must be avowed, is lost in systematising, in surrendering all public business to paid officials. To find one's sole means of livelihood or hope of advance in the State-service, transforms the whole idea of civic duty from sentiment into self-interest. Progress in "popular" government and liberal measures is marked to-day by an increase of functionaries and of expenditure. The first "citizen"-monarchy enjoyed by the French, replaced in the time of Louis Philippe, a genuine if slumbering sense of honour by a desire to procure a place under government; which to the present moment combines with Napoleon's absolutism in checking indefinitely the emergence of a vigorous and patriotic governing class. The early emissaries of Cæsar were few and conspicuous; their misdeeds and their penalties resounded through the empire. But when agents of the sovereign power were multiplied, directly responsible only to the equally corrupt vicar just above them in the hierarchy, control of this infinite multitude ceased. Custom gave them security of tenure; for the civil servant was a partial judge of faults and temptations to which he himself was no stranger.

Modern conception: 'place of profit.'

And in concluding the general survey we cannot

Failure of monarchical supervision.

forget that the increase of prerogative and the employment of centralised or absolute forms did not ensure the imperial control over the lesser agents, who wrought mischief with his name and reputation by making out of them screens for wrongdoing. The more remote provinces might drift into practical autonomy, as Naples, Venice, Amalfi ; but the more usual fate was to fall into the hands of some nominal agent of Cæsar, who had all the airs and vices of an independent feudal vassal. In such a condition, then, we leave, for the present, the general question of the administration under the "Illyrian" or adoptive emperors, from 450–550. The result of the good intentions but inherent weakness of the system will be seen in the second period, when we consider the merits, the fortune, and the failure of the successors of Justinian.

CHAPTER II

THE FAILURE OF THE AUTOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION (535–565)

The witness of contemporaries.

§ 1. It must now be confessed that the ideal of government portrayed in our last chapter, and especially in the ninth section, was a dream of perfection which never visited the earth. In this supplement it will be necessary to examine the testimony of those who lived at the very time that the central government was enunciating its loftiest aims and most earnest platitudes; and, without discouraging the general reader by excessive detail, to survey more closely than is consistent with the plan of the present task, contemporary witness,—in this age unusually abundant and strangely at variance. Three works are of especial interest—(1) the *Novels* of Justinian; (2) the *Secret History* of Procopius; (3) the *Treatise on Magistrates* by John Laurentius the Lydian. I will begin with this last; its wider political interest and historical knowledge entitle it to the first place. Procopius is a venomous purveyor of scandal and superstition; Justinian, a solemn preacher of morality and the duties of a sovereign; but Lydus, though a disappointed civil servant with a genuine grievance, has (in spite of much inaccuracy and questionable matter) both impartiality and sympathy with the difficulties of a ruler. Chiefly, however, his historical acumen gives him a right to the first hearing; for as a student of political causes he deserves, from the wide range of his learning and the boldness of his speculation, more credit than can be given to the senile ravings of Procopius' secret desk. He has a theory of the

The witness of contemporaries.

decay, indeed ruin and shipwreck, of the State; and I must carefully disentangle, from the mass of irrelevant antiquarian lore, his penetrating analysis of the reasons for this decline.

(A) *The Notary with a grievance.*

It must be remembered that the Philadelphian notary is a learned specialist, biassed in spite of himself by his narrow training and official routine. He identifies the ruin of an advocate's professional prospects with the overthrow of the State. He has served forty years (510–550) and lost his pension; therefore the very foundations of the earth are out of course. He is a representative of that cultured Neo-Platonic Hellenism, which was out of place in the age of Justinian; the world could not be ruled by men of uncertain faith and pedantic archaism. He recognises, while deploring, that the prefect of the East could be no more a man of polite letters and cultured ease; he must become an unscrupulous tax-gatherer. Nor could his chief function lie in dispensing justice; in the growing poverty of the realm there were no cases or suits, and no litigants pressed with generous fees to secure the services of notary and advocate.[1] Every allowance must be made for the peculiar attitude of Lydus. He was a survivor from a bygone age, and his political ideal was an anachronism. Those whom the Great Plague spared had need of a very different kind of government; and the future lay with the Church which Lydus could not understand, and with the military officers who had once bent low in homage before the Prefect.

The Prefecture degraded successively under (a) Constantine,

§ 2. He traces back the abasement of the prefecture (and with it of the empire) to the innovations of Constantine.[2] He has but an imperfect

[1] iii. 9: πραγμάτων μὴ ὄντων τοῖς ὑπηκόοις (? trouble or material for litigation), more fully explained in 14: ταῦτα πάντα παραπόλωλε . . . τῷ τε μὴ εἶναι πράγματα τοῖς ὑπηκόοις πενίᾳ καταφθειρομένοις, κτλ.

[2] As to the chief changes in the conception of *magistracy*, Lydus is well aware that in Republican times office was autocratic, but jealously restricted in time (Tac. *Ann.* i. 1, *ad tempus sumebantur*). He quotes from

acquaintance with the great constitutional changes of the fourth century; but he knows that the office underwent a certain modification, was confined to the Eastern frontier, abandoned the supervision of the army, and became exclusively engrossed in legal and financial functions. He repeats with solemn emphasis the curious passage (ii. 10–12; iii. 40–42) which describes this change; and it is perhaps a unique instance in our age of political theory. The next *moment* in the transformation of office and empire falls under Theodosius and Arcadius: when the sovereign ceases to go out to war, when the now civilian office of the prefecture becomes tyranny under Ruffinus by the side of legitimate authority. Had he lived in the tenth century, he might have said the same about the Regents or associate-emperors. He tells us that the old theory was that the emperor was both man of letters and man of war;[1] but when he ceased to discharge any effective duties in person, power fell into the hands of the new vizierate. After the overthrow of Ruffinus, its

The Prefecture degraded successively under (α) Constantine,

(β) *Arcadius,*

Aurelius (*Dig.* i. xi.): τοῖς ἀρχαίοις . . . ἡ πᾶσα πρὸς καιρὸν ἐξουσία . . . ἐπιστεύετο i. 14; and says himself, on the consulate of a year only, πανταχοῦ Ῥωμαίων ταῖς ἐναλλαγαῖς χαιρόντων, i. 37. Efficiency demands first the indefinite extension of exceptional commissions (as with Pompey); next, the duration of office is lengthened to the term of life; lastly (with more doubtful results), to the term of a dynasty. All minor offices were merged into the Principate, which thus united and indefinitely prolonged; after his fatal war against Senate and Pompey (ὀλέθριον πόλεμον, i. 38) Cæsar became θεὸς, ἀρχιερεὺς, ὕπατος, μόναρχος, ἐπίτροπος τῶν ἁπανταχοῦ βασιλέων, ἵππαρχος, στρατηγὸς, φύλαξ πόλεως, πρῶτος δημάρχων. The tendency then (as Lydus recognised), was no longer to pass office round among the citizens, but to make government an expert profession, demanding not merely special training but special descent; he has a curious passage on the early *hereditary* character of Cæsarism (τὸ πάλαι μὴ τῷ τυχόντι ἀλλὰ μόνοις τοῖς ἐκ τῆς καίσαρος σειρᾶς κατιοῦσιν ἐγχειρίζειν τὸ κράτος, ii. 3).

[1] iii. 53. Trajan's officers οἳ τοῖς τε λόγοις τοῖς τε ἔργοις εἰς τοσαύτην εὔκλειαν τὴν πολιτείαν ἀνέστησαν. But after the troubles of Justin's reign, especially the Persian war, τὸ λοιπὸν λογικοῖς πάροδος οὐκ ἦν ἐπὶ τὴν ἐπαρχότητα. So iii. 33. Constantine πολὺς ὢν ἐν τῇ παιδεύσει λόγων κ. συνασκήσει ὅπλων (οὐδὲ γὰρ, εἰ μὴ καθ' ἑκατέραν παίδευσιν ἔτυχέ τις διαπρέπων, βασιλεὺς . . . προεχειρίζετο).

The Prefecture degraded successively under

(β) Arcadius,

authority was reduced[1] and matters went on without change until the ill-starred African expedition in Leo's reign. To this disaster Lydus attaches the gravest importance; and he believed that the Commonwealth never recovered from the blow.[2] He entertained the most sinister opinion of Leo and his Isaurian son-in-law; and saw in the unfortunate holders of the once proud title of Prefect, mere fiscal agents who sought in vain to collect funds from a ruined people. For Anastasius, under whom he began his public service (510 or 511), he had the liveliest affection and esteem;[3] but he traced to the influence of Marinus the most disastrous step in further deterioration. This low-born "deskman,"[4] Scriniarius, was raised to the prefecture in the prevailing indigence; and it is certain that Anastasius left a substantial treasure as reserve-fund for future

(γ) Anastasius,

[1] ii. 10: P. *τυραννίδα μελετήσαντα . . . εἰς βάραθρον τὴν ἀρχὴν καταρρῖψαι. Αὐτίκα μὲν γὰρ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς ἐκ τῶν ὅπλων ἰσχύος ἀφαιρεῖται . . . φαβρικῶν (ὁπλοποιιῶν) φροντίδος . . . δημοσίου δρόμου* (a charge soon restored to the Prefect, but under careful supervision). So iii. 7. P. . . . *τὴν ὕπαρχον ἀρχὴν κρημνίσαντος.* So iii. 23, where the changes of the terrified Arcadius after R.'s tyranny are set forth.

[2] See iii. 43, 44: *ναυάγιον τῆς ὅλης πολιτείας.* "For neither the public treasury nor the prince's privy purse sufficing, all the equipment of war perished at once in that luckless enterprise; and after this disaster the exchequer was no longer able to play its part but long forestalls all its receipts (*οὐκέτι τὸ ταμιεῖον ἐπήρκεσεν ἑαυτῷ ἀλλὰ προσαπανᾷ . . . πρὸ καιροῦ τὰ μήπω ἐν ἐλπίδι . . . ὡς ἀπέραντον εἶναι τὴν ἀπορίαν τοῦ δημοσίου*). For the sins of Leo and Zeno (of whom Justinian speaks, *τῆς εὐσεβοῦς λήξεως*), see 45.

[3] [Anastasius] iii. 47: "For this one merit that he alone after Constantine lightened the burden of taxation (*τὴν τῶν ψυχῶν ἐκούφισε δασμολογίαν*), though death prevented the full relief, may God forgive all the sins he ever committed; for he was but a man." In 51 he has, like Psellus five hundred years later, a very proper judgment of the dangers of a pacific and civilian régime, which prevailed in the early years of the sixth century under Anastasius: *εἰρήνη δὲ βαθεῖα τὴν πᾶσαν ἐχαύνου πολιτείαν κ. οὐχ ἥκιστα τὸν στρατιώτην, πάντων ὁμοῦ τὴν τῆς αὐλῆς μᾶστώνην ζηλούντων κ. διωκόντων τὰ βασιλέως ἐπιτηδεύματα.* This sentence might well form the text of the whole later period after Basil II.

[4] iii. 30. There was no doubt about the plenary authority of Marinus, *τὴν ὅλην ἀναζωσάμενος τῶν πραγμάτων διοίκησιν.* The taxes disappeared and the retinue vanished *διὰ τὴν τῶν φόρων ἐλάττωσιν εἰς παντελῆ ἀπώλειαν τὰ τῆς τάξεως κατέστη.* For his enormities, see iii. 49, 50, 51.

needs. But the office no longer employed cultured notaries and dignified advocates; it was contented with menial satellites of extortion and inquisition.[1] With the advent of the reigning house from Dardania (518) the tempest burst upon the empire. The Persian war, started by the faithless Chosroes, called for exceptional expenditure; the European provinces were wasted by Getæ and Antes; the emperor embarked in colossal and untimely enterprises of recovery; and to crown the confusion, John of Cappadocia succeeded to the remnants of the degraded office. He gives us those full and racy details of his scandalous life, transferred to the pages of modern historians, who neglect the more edifying parts of Lydus. The fragments contain a description of his successor Phocas, and the attempt of this Prefect to introduce some order into the hopeless chaos of imperial finance. Finally, we have the account of the Cappadocian's misdeeds, tempered by a solemn statement that Justinian knew nothing of them. At the moment when Theodora is about to depose the too powerful minister, the narrative is interrupted by a lacuna. It is to the first misrule of the Cappadocian that he traces the revolt of Nika, costing (as he asserts with some exaggeration) 50,000 lives. It is thus clear that Lydus confuses the order of time in order to heap all responsibility for disaster on a single culprit's head. The wars of aggrandisement and the Persian campaigns were subsequent to the Nika insurrection; and John enjoyed his longest tenure of the office some time later.

The Prefecture degraded successively under (γ) Anastasius, (δ) the Dardanians.

§ 3. Such is the criticism passed on two and a half centuries of Roman methods of government

Lydus as critic of the imperial policy.

[1] iii. 39. Freedom is the distinguishing feature of the Roman Commonwealth, and this is now entirely out of favour. The modern official was ignorant of tradition and precedent, and of the limit and purpose of all civil authority. Some day they will learn to respect liberty, and cease to injure the subjects (ὑβρίζειν μὲν τὴν ἐλευθερίαν κ. σπαράττειν τοὺς ὑπηκόους οἱ τὸν ὅρον τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀγνοοῦντες εἰτραπήσονται).

Lydus as critic of the imperial policy.

(300–550). Lydus believes (no doubt rightly) that the want of money was the root of all evil; that, while municipal franchises were abolished, armies starved, and costly expeditions lost through careless neglect or inadequate equipment, the second office in the empire was degraded into a mere robber of the well-to-do. For this, no imperial demon in human form was responsible, as in the foolish rodomontade of Procopius. It is plain that Lydus believes the emperor to exert very little power, to know very little of the true condition of the land, and to have abandoned, with his warlike skill and eloquence, all real control.[1] When Ruffinus and John set up the state, not of a powerful minister but of a rival emperor, the sole remedy was no doubt to break up the single office and make of the débris a host of squalid and petty magistracies. Side by side with the significant statement of Agathias that Justinian was the first genuine autocrat in fact as well as theory, it is interesting to note the limits on absolutism which Lydus recognises. He is under no illusions as to the emperor's power. Since Leo's disaster, the State is bankrupt; and these "transient and embarrassed phantoms," the Prefect-Chancellors of the Exchequer, struggle vainly against ruin. The emperor can do nothing but throw himself into the

The ultimate ruin of the office under John.

[1] He blames neglect of former princes (seemingly he includes all the successors of Theodosius), ii. 15, 16: *τοὺς ἔμπροσθεν βεβασιλεύκοτας ῥᾳστώνῃ διέλυσε* (*cp.* 11, where Theodosius, foreseeing his sons' *ῥᾳστώνη*, legislates (!) against emperor's personal conduct of war, *νόμῳ τὴν ἀνδρίαν ἐχαλίνωσε*). So the emperor was supreme judge in the Court of Final Appeal; but this good use lapsed into desuetude owing to growth of idleness, just as Synesius complained before Arcadius (16, *συνηθείας εἰς τρυφὴν διαλυθείσης κ. τῶν ἔμπροσθεν ἅμα τοῖς ὅπλοις κ. αὐτὴν τὴν μεχρὶ λόγων φροντίδα τῶν κοινῶν ἀποπτυσάντων*). In spite of several errors, Lydus is clear (1) that the prefect became a sovereign and irresponsible vizier, and the emperor a puppet, both in war and judicial duties: (2) when the prefecture was reduced and broken up, the emperor strove in vain to recover his authority. The golden days of the empire lasted so long as sovereigns led in battle and provincial governors were vigilant for justice, not rapine; iii. 10: *τῶν μὲν ἔμπροσθεν βασιλέων ἐπὶ τοὺς πολέμους ὁρμώντων κ. τῶν τὰς ἐπαρχίας ἰθυνόντων τοῖς νόμοις ἀλλ' οὐ ταῖς κλοπαῖς προσαγριπνούντων.*

arms of any unscrupulous scoundrel who promises to supply funds for the imperial needs. It was of no avail to elevate a high ideal of State-duty and personal service, while resort was had to torture and oppression, while taxes were collected at the cost of noble lives. This picture of the necessitous monarchy will explain much that is absurd or unintelligible in Procopius; and, while both civil servants (of a bygone age) have each their grievance, Lydus' moderation of tone and temperate criticism gains him credence and puts him on a far higher level among historians.

The ultimate ruin of the office under John.

Such is the main thesis of Lydus for our purpose. Antiquarian though he be, a personal motive led him to trace the Roman offices in the periods of kingship, republic, and empire. And interesting as is the survey of their archaic origin and use (with all his amusing errors of time or fact), the vigorous part of his story deals with his own time and his own injuries. As a philosophical statesman or theorist of government, he has passages of great judgment and shrewdness, and demands more attention than he has yet received from the student of constitutional history.

§ 4. With Procopius the case is altogether different. I fully accept the results of Professor Bury's learned researches, and acknowledge with regret that this vindictive and foolish fairy-story is the posthumous work of a consummate hypocrite. . . . Procopius would seem to have borrowed from current Christianity nothing but its superstition, and to have completely abandoned the temperate judgment which makes us value his story of Belisarius' campaign. Yet the work is by no means lacking in material for a kinder opinion. We can easily recognise the lineaments of the same Justinian that Lydus reveals.[1]

(B) *Procopius' 'Secret History.'*

[1] M. Diehl has drawn attention to the amiable weakness of character betrayed in Justinian's later portraits; and it is clear that a careful physiognomist would detect its presages even in features of the earlier

(B) *Procopius' 'Secret History,' evidence ruined by hyperbole and inconsistency.*

Here we find behind the mask of an ogre or bogey, an untiring and painstaking ruler of limited capacity, surrounded by men he could not trust, and finding his unique expedient in an autocracy which he could not maintain. Hampered at every turn by the want of money, he became the victim and the dupe of any minister who promised to replenish his coffers. He was unable and unwilling to inquire too closely into the methods of the fisc. In place of trained servants, the prefect was surrounded by alien bailiffs and executioners. Even Lydus' accounts of tyranny, exaction, and torture, both in the capital and in his own birthplace, Philadelphia, may well be exaggerated. But Procopius defeats his own end, and while defending a notorious criminal, tries to blame the emperor for ingratitude in his treatment of John of Cappadocia. It is hopeless to expect consistency in this venomous attack. Justinian is alternately made out to be the incarnation of devilish cunning and an amiable and easy-going dupe. His uncle was like a mule, following any one who grasped the halter, shaking his ears with a grotesque solemnity. But the nephew is a sheep, at the mercy of the last speaker, ignorant, weakly affable, and incorrigibly untruthful. Yet he is also Domitian[1] reincarnate for the ruin of the empire, or Satan himself come to earth to wreak his vengeance on the whole human race and slay as many as possible, knowing that his time is short. He is the single author of all the

coins and conquests. Succeeding too hurriedly to enterprises which seemed past belief, he spent thirty years in a vain attempt to recover his position in the zenith from which Nemesis deposed him in the very moment of triumph. In spite of his weakness and (as we cannot doubt) his own sense of his shortcomings, of the limits to absolute benevolence, he never relinquished the struggle; he is one of the bravest and most persevering sovereigns in history, and bears no slight resemblance to another victim of ambition and overwork, Philip II. of Spain.

[1] Proc. insists on the remarkable physical resemblance of the two monarchs. Even Lydus, ii. 19, seems to compare the two, though without expressly stating it, *κενόδοξος γὰρ ὢν ὁ Δομετιανὸς τοῖς νεωτερισμοῖς ἔχαιρεν· ἴδιον δὲ τυράννου ἀνατρέπειν τὰ πάλαι καθεστήκοτα.*

calamities which befell the State; and the enlargement of the realm on which Lydus dwells with pride and admiration, is a chief point in the indictment of Procopius. The reader must sternly disregard the scandalous account of Theodora's youth (so dear to the odious taste of Gibbon and his age) and the legends of the imperial goblin, his aims and policy and habits. Yet notwithstanding, we can extract evidence from the lucid intervals in this fantastic nightmare, which bears out the witness of other authors and is even consistent with his own published works. Yet the reckless rancour of the *Anecdota* will always prejudice the rare student of a problematic age. It is hard on a first acquaintance to credit Procopius with any better aim than wilfully to caricature the characters of men and the events of a period, to which he had consecrated so much serious pains and literary labour.

(B) *Procopius' 'Secret History,' evidence ruined by hyperbole and inconsistency.*

§ 5. Wherever he speaks of the personal initiative of Justinian and Theodora, or of the myriads of mortals sacrificed in war, or plague, or levy, to satisfy their greed of carnage, we must discount his accuracy. But he is not at fault on certain features of the time which the unhappy emperor would have been the first to admit. They may be arranged in the following order. The State as a whole was full of (α) *civic* riot and license, and of (β) *religious* mutiny and disaffection. Anastasius had been the victim of a tumult in which the imperial dignity was gravely compromised. The circus factions in every great city fought and destroyed one another, like a modern mob at a football match, or a crowd at a race-course when suspicious of unfair play. The ordinary police[1] were unable to cope with this wild disorder, in which, besides the conventional

P. as witness to (i.) *domestic disorders,*

(a) *civic riot,*

[1] Lydus, ii. 15, deplores the popular tumults which made peace more dangerous than war (ὁ δῆμος θεηλάτοις διχονοίαις ἀναπτόμενος . . . ὧν ἕνεκα βαρυτέραν τὸ δημόσιον δαπάνην ὑφίσταται πρὸς φυλακὴν τῆς εἰρήνης ἢ πρὸς ἀναχαιτισμὸν τῶν πολεμίων), and the maintenance of domestic order more costly than the repression of foreign foes.

P. as witness to (a) *civic riot,*

favouritism of the Colours, there mingled an element of theological enmity and misplaced metaphysical acumen. These frequent scenes of riot which baffled the vigilance of the urban prefects grew in intensity throughout the empire, until the fires of aimless sedition were quenched in the suppression of the *Nika;* and the last degraded remnant of ancient classical freedom was abolished.

The vacillating conduct of the emperor to the partisans, the nervous division of imperial favour between the two chief factions, bears strong witness to a real danger and menace to public order. But it also completely disposes of the usual allegations as to the miserable state of the populace throughout the empire. In the famous dialogue between the factions and the imperial Mandator, there is some question of official oppression by a certain Calopodius, none of general public grievance or intolerable tax. This licentious leisure and insolent repletion of the urban mob proves nothing, I am well aware, as to the state of the country districts or the happiness of the peasant. But it is at least certain that in the first quarter of the sixth century the town-proletariat, indulged and feared, relieved from care by a pauperising Church and a Socialist government, found ample leisure for a tumultuous amusement which shook the throne and dissolved society.

(b) *religious schism,*

The empire was (β) full of *religious* disaffection: Justinian is represented as the persecutor of astrologers, Montanists, Manicheans, Hebrews, and Samaritans (*Anecd.*, §§ 11, 28); and we know that this last body created a serious rising in Palestine, elected a rival emperor Julian, and sold their lives dearly. It is then unfair to hold the emperor accountable for a universal feature of the time, namely, a widespread discontent with Hellenic orthodoxy, which is largely to blame for the ease of the Arabian conquests just a century later.

§ 6. Another characteristic of the age was an inarticulate *fiscal grievance* under a mistaken system of economy, to which no alternative was ever suggested. One serious charge in the *Anecdota* is that Justinian never remitted arrears of taxation ; it being the custom, both before and after that prince, to require taxes on an impossible scale and condone those arrears which necessarily arose, as an act of imperial grace and at regular intervals. The Byzantine Government might well have listened to the advice given by a well-known teacher to an ambitious but disappointing youth ; "Take a lower ideal and live up to it." Nor can the emperor be blamed for desiring that the laws should be set in operation (Tiberius' *leges exercendas esse*), and the taxes duly collected unless expressly repealed. It is impossible to defend a fiscal system, which ruined the poorer owners and made notable victims among the great. But it is a little remarkable that no alternative scale of taxation was proposed ; and modern critics (as I have said before) can scarcely complain if the wealthy were rated that the indigent might be relieved. There is no doubt that in this period the realm was rapidly impoverished, both in men, in capital, and in natural resources. The emperor, helplessly confronting an impracticable task, watched with alarm the growing wastes, attempted to collect the rates on derelict property from the unhappy neighbours of the fraudulent fugitive, and was obliged to shut his eyes to the odious means by which the prefect filled the exchequer. While officials waxed wealthy and the country poor, the sole method left to the monarch was the Oriental device : a vizier was permitted to enrich himself at the expense of the subjects that the State might confiscate and become his sole legatee. Of this there is no lack of proof at this time.

P. as witness to (c) *fiscal oppression,*

(d) *impoverishment of realm.*

Justinian is by turns accused as spendthrift and avaricious, wasteful and hoarding (§§ 5, 8, 19). It

(e) *penury and strait of the exchequer.*

P. as witness to (e) *penury and strait of the exchequer.*

is easy to explain this inconsistency by a simple fact, that he was at his wits' end to secure money for the conduct of government, the prosecution of his aims.[1] Once embarked on his gigantic schemes of recovery, which he regarded as a sacred duty, there was for him no turning back. He was forced by circumstances to forget in practice his high ideals of pure justice and official innocence. He sold office as Pulcheria had done a century before, while forbidding all such *civil* simony (§§ 20, 21). He modified the rigid outline of impersonal law to suit the needs (and the purse) of eager applicants for privilege; and Leo the Cilician became a trusted minister because he taught Justinian this easy mode of replenishing the treasury (§§ 13, 14). This same indigence and thrift crept into every department of State; he allowed Alexander in Italy and Hephæstus in Alexandria to cut off the corn-supplies and estrange the poor (§ 26). Although these distributions of *political* bread were discontinued without protest under Heraclius in a still severer crisis, it is clear that only the direst need would compel an emperor to run counter to the demands of a dangerous urban mob.

(ii.) *External policy:* (a) *Military enterprise and extravagance,*

§ 7. We have spoken of the *civic* factions, and of *religious* and *fiscal* troubles, for which the times and not the administration must be blamed. We come now to Justinian's warlike *aggression*, and to his system of national *defence;* both forming serious counts in Procopius' virulent indictment. We have already dealt with the former; the recovery of the ancient limits of the empire seemed not a wanton aggrandisement, but a plain duty and an obvious task. We have already shown that there is a reverse side to all imperialism; for the people in an age of conquest rarely benefit by their glorious history. The arguments and the common sense of

[1] Lydus, iii. 54, ἔδει δὲ χρημάτων κ. οὐδὲν ἦν ἄνευ αὐτῶν πραχθῆναι τῶν δεόντων . . . Χρυσίον οὖν ἄπειρον ἐχρῆν εἰσομβρίσαι τὴν ἐπαρχότητα.

the Little Englander would be unimpeachable, were it not for a justifiable fear that without Greater Britain there would be no more Little England. The party of Quaker protest against ambition and militarism has a constant value; and the general question of the necessity or merit of Justinian's victories will always be debated. But the plaintiff destroys his credit, and alienates an impartial jury, by his extravagant hyperbole. He regards Justinian as the unique cause of all the disasters which befell the world; he notes his thirst for blood, and estimates at a modest total of a myriad myriad myriads the number of deaths during his reign. Italy and Africa are reduced to a desolate wilderness; and he computes among his victims the Teutonic strangers and persecutors whom he expelled. But as planning the deliberate ruin of the entire globe, he is also held responsible for all deaths by natural catastrophe, by deluge and flood, earthquake and pestilence. There can be no doubt as to the well-deserved and unhappy renown of this sixth century. Popes like Gregory the Great, emperors like Tiberius and Maurice, seem conscious that in such universal disaster the "end of all things drew near." The age was dissolving, and all was prepared for the reign of Antichrist. Yet it is strange to find the most serious preacher of this superstitious dread among the dwindling ranks of cultured Hellenism. For Procopius the reign of Antichrist had already begun; the devil himself sat enthroned in the palace, as a holy monk averred and as events abundantly proved. It is tempting to believe that these absurd accretions to a charge-list, in itself formidable enough, were the work of a Nonconformist interpolator, who hated Justinian more for his heterodoxy than for the public ruin he brought on mankind. But we may take apart the losses of war, the damage of recovery, and the constant repetitions of far-off conquest which were entailed by the fiscal system, the disorders of the

(ii.) External policy:
(a) Military enterprise and extravagance,

prevalent misery and despair,

the reign of Antichrist.

(ii.) *External policy: the reign of Antichrist.*

army of occupation, the constant lack of money and men. For these Justinian must in a measure be held to account, yet is it possible for his ancient or modern critics to suggest an alternative policy?

(b) *Defensive system:*

As to the system of *national defence*, Justinian soon found this a graver task than chivalrous crusades against Arian usurpers in Africa or Italy. Here we may note three distinct and deliberate designs, all of which succumb to the sweeping censure of the *Anecdotist:* (1) *Payment to the barbarians* (§§ 11, 19, 30) instead of repressing their inroads. Justinian (it was said), himself a barbarian (§ 14), loved these wild tribes better than his own subjects (§§ 21, 23); he punished these without mercy for daring to defend themselves against his darling and privileged marauders; and (perhaps as a counterpoise to the citizens who detested him) he filled Byzantium with an incredible number of aliens.—Now it is quite clear that there were two good reasons for the attitude of Justinian so absurdly exaggerated in the previous sentence. (α) Confident in the majesty and the mission of Rome, he believed it possible to reduce all barbarians into humble *vassals of the empire.* Evidence of this will be seen in the division which treats of the Eastern nations: it seemed a consistent aim of these two reigns (518–565) to *infeudate*, as it were, those kings, whose people could never become immediate subjects, and bind them by titular dignity and costly gifts to a certain loyalty. But a far more serious reason existed: (β) he had *no forces at his disposal* to repel these migrants and unwelcome visitors. No doubt he overestimated his resources at the opening of his reign; and it is clear that the capital and the neighbouring district were inadequately protected; that the double line of fortress-defence along the Danube was powerless to keep out intruders.

(1) *Invaders bribed.*

(2) *Chain of fortresses built.*

For (2) the *fortifications on the frontier* were a special feature of Justinian's policy. He preferred to guard rather than waste human life; and the very system

which earned a warm and apparently sincere approval in Procopius' official work on *Edifices* is held up to derision in the *Anecdota* as a purposeless waste of money. (ii.) *External policy:* (2) *Chain of fortresses built.*

(3) He *starved the soldiers* (§ 24) and the military chest. Here again we can find a mixture of definite intention and sheer necessity. He could neither maintain nor control the armies which were demanded by his active campaign and national defence. The unrestrained supremacy of the army meant the triumph of the barbarians; and statesmen had not forgotten Gainas and Tribigild under Arcadius: perhaps some turned over the cryptic pages of Synesius' political allegory. The Prefect controlled the commissariat, dissuaded from ambitious expeditions, and distrusted the several foreign contingents which obeyed a native captain and cared little for the policy or the subjects of the empire. The effective forces of a vast territory shrank to a figure incredibly small; and after the great reaction which nullified the rapid successes of early years, hasty levies and private enterprise became the sole resource. The straitness of the exchequer and the jealousy of the civilians amply accounted for the imperfect system or the often trumpery make-shifts of national defence. Here, again, the prince, with the best intentions in the world, was the helpless creature of circumstance. (3) *Deficient support of Army.*

There is besides one further count in our formidable indictment, the *centralising tendency* which suppressed the privileges of the *Senate*, persecuted and confiscated the persons and estates of senators, and abolished *municipal franchise* and the faint remnants of local spirit. We know that under Justinian the cleavage between citizen-contributors (ὑποτελεῖς) and the official world became intensified; and every authority that did not depend directly from the centre was suspected and curtailed. Thus the Greek garrisons were disbanded; the populace was disarmed; and (though this point is exceedingly obscure) some further blow was struck at the freedom of borough (iii.) *Internal policy: Jealous centralisation and curtailment of franchise.*

(iii.) *Internal policy: Jealous centralisation and curtailment of franchise.*

towns already weakened by the bureaucratic methods of Marinus the prefect of Anastasius. It is exceedingly difficult to criticise when evidence is both slight and conflicting. Can we blame the monarch of a State, whose whole aim is conservation and order, if he confines the use of weapons to a responsible class of police-sergeants and soldiers? Is it not conceivable that at no very distant date the most rudimentary needs of government will oblige the freest and the most absolute States in the world, England and Russia, to disarm the great proportion of their subjects under the severest penalties? Did the behaviour of the circus-factions justify the prince or his advisers in leaving further temptations in the hand of turbulent partisans? It is quite possible to draw up a damning charge, as Mr. Gladstone did in the very similar case of the Neapolitan prisons, from the ideal standpoint of a generous but ignorant Liberalism: Justinian may be represented as the wanton murderer of public liberty and local franchise, the jealous suppressor of free-thought in the Platonic Schools, the vindictive tyrant who abolishes the consulate because it was an abiding witness to long-lost freedom.

Modern critics at fault.

J.'s acts: their excuse and motive.

But all this righteous indignation is wide of the mark. Where we know so little of circumstances and policy, we must withhold our judgment; yet it is easy to supply a ready and perhaps superficial reply to each of these counts. Local liberty (whether of assembly or self-defence) was a mere pretext (we may say) for feudal lawlessness, or municipal corruption, or civic tumult. The lecture-halls of Damascius at Athens were already silent, and we must pardon Justinian if he shared a belief common to all governments until quite recent years, that they are responsible for the souls of their subjects and the spiritual belief which will save them from perdition. The abolition of the consulate was a welcome end to unmeaning parade and needless expense: the

proud name itself, a mere synonym for a lavish dole, brought no tender memories of Brutus or Poplicola to the populace of Rome or Byzantium. *J.'s acts: their excuse and motive.*

In conclusion, we can easily detect the truth underlying this savage attack. Justinian was amiable and conscientious, but vain, easily led, and sadly ignorant (like most absolute rulers) of the real state of affairs. He was an "innovator" (§ 11), because, like Rameses of Egypt, he wished to see his own name on new institutions or offices, and desired to leave his own permanent stamp on the Commonwealth for which he toiled with such unsparing industry. For the Roman world was in a transitional stage, and the sixth century was marked by a wholesale disappearance of archaic elements,—of culture, nationality, ideals, methods, and religion. It is doubtful if any one else could have succeeded better where Justinian failed. The Teutonic monarchies of Africa and Italy were already doomed when he set out on his costly enterprise of recovery. He held the Colossus together, whether for the good of mankind or not, I cannot say; there are no general principles acknowledged in the sphere of government and politics to which I can refer, nor can I plead a moral conviction in a matter where the special needs and circumstances vary from age to age, and where conscious human effort or wish has so scanty a result. But one is happily permitted to say this much of a great and noble character, with complete assurance; he followed the path of duty and conscience and honour, where these ideals seemed to beckon him; he bestowed ungrudging personal service and sleepless vigilance upon a task that (as he believed) Heaven itself had set him; and he cannot be blamed if the weight and burden of empire overtaxed his strength and his capacity. No criticism of the closet can deprive him of the undying honour and the unchallenged place which he occupies and will always retain in the imperial series. *Real character of the emperor emerges clearly from Procopius' diatribe.*

EVIDENCE FROM THE CONSTITUTIONS OF JUSTINIAN (535–565)

THE EMPEROR AND HIS OFFICIALS

(C) *J. judged by himself.*

§ 1. We may now ask what was the ideal of sovereignty and government which floated before the mind of Justinian, never lost sight of though never to be realised in fact. His absolute power, by which alone he believed that the general welfare could be secured, resembled that of the French Bourbons or the monarchy of Frederic the Great. The State was embodied in his person and his will, but this supreme majesty was neither mute nor uncommunicative; it condescended to explain its motive, as in the humanitarian preambles of French law, and to justify its authority as the servant of the public, entrusted with the care of ruling by God's will and the popular choice. Justinian is continually pleading the greatness of his task, the needs of the State, the distress of his exchequer, the misrule of his officials. He has no misgivings in his mandate; he receives instructions from above and from below. He is the vicegerent of God and the first magistrate of the people. It will be well to see in what light he regarded his heavy and responsible duties, and what convictions sustained him in his arduous task and continual disappointments.

(a) *His conception of his post; universal supervision.*

(a) *The Imperial Position.*—There is no doubt about the *popular* character of Cæsarism; the emperor is the people's delegate or tribune to keep them in peaceful plenty and save them trouble, Nov. 16;[1] to watch over the worldly interests, as the priesthood over the spiritual welfare of the subject-class,

[1] Ed. Leipzig 1881, Zach. von Ling.: "We watch night and day counselling our subjects' good" (*ὅπως ἂν χρηστόν τε κ. ἀρέσκον Θεῷ παρ' ἡμῶν τοῖς ὑπηκόοις δοθείη . . . ὥστε τοὺς ἡμετέρους ὑπηκόους ἐν εὐπαθείᾳ γίνεσθαι πάσης φροντίδος ἀπηλλαγμένους*).

(a) *His conception of his post; universal supervision.*

N. 12;[1] to restore the old paths and keep precedent alive, N. 21, p. 136;[2] to respect the individual citizen without endangering the general good, N. 21, p. 137;[3] to carry out Heaven's will in making men good, N. 28,[4] p. 413,[5] extirpating heresy and rooting out all occasion of evil or secret sin; to keep off false and malignant charges from the innocent, N. 38, p. 230;[6] to replace the oversight or carelessness of past emperors, and to meet any sudden crisis, watchful and prepared, N. 9, p. 17;[7] to put away any grievance between army and people, N. 150,[8] or (what might be still more difficult) between taxpayers and collectors, N. 152, p. 280; and, most important of all, to insist on unity of religious

[1] "Two greatest gifts of the heavenly mercy to man (*ἱερωσύνη τε κ. βασιλεία*), the one ministering in things divine, the other ruling and taking care of human affairs (*τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἐξάρχουσά τε κ. ἐπιμελουμένη*); both issue forth from the same source to adorn human life (*ἐκ μιᾶς τε κ. τῆς αὐτῆς ἀρχῆς ἑκατέρα προϊουσα*); and no aim is so dear to sovereigns (*περισπούδαστον βασιλεῦσιν*) as the holy dignity of priests. For true harmony will arise in the State, if the one be always blameless and enjoy free speech to heaven, while the other rule aright the Commonwealth entrusted to it" (*ὀρθῶς τε κ. προσηκόντως κατακοσμοίη τὴν παραδοθεῖσαν αὐτῇ πολιτείαν*.

[2] The *Mandata Principis* (address. Tribonian) in a Latin preface; *nobis* reparantibus *omnem vetustatem* jam deperditam jam deminutam.

[3] *ὥσπερ γὰρ τοῖς ἰδιωταῖς ἀδικουμένοις βοηθοῦμεν, οὕτω κ. τὸ δημόσιον ἀνεπηρέαστον μένειν βουλόμεθα.*

[4] "It is obvious to all right-minded and sensible men that our whole end and prayer is, that the subjects whom God has entrusted to our care may live well, and find favour with Him" (*πᾶσα ἡμῖν σπουδὴ κ. εὐχὴ τὸ τοὺς πιστευθέντας ἡμῖν παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ καλῶς βιοῦν κ. τὴν αὐτοῦ εὑρεῖν εὐμένειαν*).

[5] Constit. 66: the date at which *ὁ Θεὸς τοῖς Ῥωμαίων ἐπέστησε πράγμασιν* (*cf.* exord. N. 103, vol. ii. 42).

[6] *ἡμῶν διὰ τοῦτο κ. πόνους ὑποστάντων κ. δαπάνης μεγάλης ἀνεχομένων ἵνα μή τινι τῶν ἡμετ. ὑπηκόων τις συκοφαντία κ. χρημάτων ἢ ψυχῆς ἀπώλεια.*

[7] 535 A.D. *Ἐνησχολημένοις ἡμῖν περὶ τὰς ἁπάσης πολιτείας φροντίδας κ. μικρὸν οὐδὲν αἱρουμένοις ἐννοεῖν ἀλλ' ὅπως Πέρσαι μὲν ἠρεμοίεν Βανδίλοι δὲ σὺν Μαυρουσίοις ὑπακούοιεν Καρχηδονίοι δὲ τὴν παλαίαν ἀπολαβόντες ἔχοιεν ἐλευθερίαν Τζανοί τε νῦν πρῶτον ὑπὸ τὴν Ῥωμαίων γενόμενοι πολιτείαν ἐν ὑπηκόοις τελοῖεν . . . ἐπιῤῥέουσι κ. ἰδιωτικαὶ φροντίδες παρὰ τῶν ἡμετ. ὑπηκόων.*

[8] 545 A.D. *Περὶ παρόδοις Στρατιωτῶν . . . ἐφ' ᾧ ἀζημίους φυλάττεσθαι τοὺς ἡμετ. ὑπηκόους.*

(a) His conception of his post; universal supervision.

belief, the very foundation of the State, NN. 147,[1] 129.[2] He often refers to the ample increase of territory which God has given him; all his subjects, new as well as old, are a sacred charge in which the purpose of Heaven is clearly manifest, N. 93, p. 511;[3] and it behoves him to take care of the smallest detail of government, N. 96, p. 529.[4] The Roman Commonwealth is not a makeshift or a compromise, but the final form of polity, approved by God; he prays that it may be eternal, N. 66, p. 412.[5] It throws back its roots into the dim past: he himself is a descendant of Æneas; the second founders of the kingdom were Romulus and Numa; and the third or imperial phase was introduced by Augustus, when by a necessary transfer made with all goodwill, the Senate (N. 80–81), hitherto executive as well as consulting or advisory body, gave up their accumulated prerogative into a single hand. It has two chief aims, mercy and freedom; for all its laws are directed to kindliness (*φιλανθρωπία*), N. 71, p. 431,[6] and liberty, N. 70, p. 422.[7] Under-

[1] "First and greatest blessing to all men we believe to be the orthodox confession of the true and blameless creed of Christians (*ὀρθὴν ὁμολογίαν*), so that in all ways it may be strengthened, and that the holy bishops throughout the world should be united in harmony (*εἰς ὁμόνοιαν συναφθῆναι*), and believe and preach the right faith with one voice (*ὁμοφώνως*), and that every pretext of the heretic be taken away." With these conscientious convictions as to a ruler's duty Justinian's Cæsaropapism needs no further justification.

[2] "We believe hope in God to be the sole aid for the whole life of our commonwealth and realm, knowing that this gives salvation of soul and safety of empire, so that it is fitting that all our legislation should depend on this alone, and look continually to this end; for this is the beginning, the middle, and the conclusion of our laws."

[3] 538 A.D. *τοῖς ὑπηκόοις ὁπόσους ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς πρότερόν τε παρέδωκε κ. κατὰ μικρὸν ἀεὶ προστίθησι.*

[4] He begins his Constit. on *Alexandrians* and Egyptian prefectures, *εἰ κ. τὰ σμικρότατα τῶν πραγμάτων τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἀξιοῦμεν προνοίας πολλῷ μᾶλλον τὰ μέγιστα, κτλ.*

[5] *τὰ τρίτα προοίμια . . . τῆς βασιλείας* (Julius and Augustus), *οὕτω τὴν πολιτείαν ἡμιν ἐξεινρήσει τὴν νῦν κρατοῦσαν, εἴη δ' ἀθάνατος, ἐξ ἐκείνων προιοῦσαν.*

[6] 537 A.D. *ἐπείδη πρὸς φιλανθρωπίαν ἅπως ἡμῖν ἡ νόμος ἥρμοσται.*

[7] *ἐλευθερίας γὰρ ὄντες ἐρασταὶ ἔναγχος τεθείκαμεν νόμον.*

stood and implicated in all this was the duty of an unceasing vigilance in controlling the agents of government; and it is on this side that Justinian has to admit his failure. *(α) His conception of his post; universal supervision.*

(β) Official Misdemeanours.—The policy of the early fourth century was (as we have seen) to sever offices, to create a number of new posts, to divide responsibility, and to interest as large a proportion as possible of the inhabitants of the empire in the duties and emoluments of government and the maintenance of public order. This proportion might rival that which exists to-day in the similar governments of Russia or France, both happy hunting-grounds for obscure and underpaid officialism, which is the real danger in the socially democratic State. The result had been eminently unsatisfactory. Each limited command became an area for petty misdemeanours and peculation. It was impossible to arouse in these low-born and selfish functionaries a sense of public duty. A hereditary noble (like a national sovereign) has everything to lose by disregarding the popular will or welfare. The whole system of the early Roman *patronate* was built on this sensitiveness of privilege and dignity; Lydus deplores the decay of this generous hospitality among the Roman politicians, and it had without doubt ceased to characterise social intercourse. The State confronted the unit directly; and intermediate modes of benevolent activity vanished. But in aiming at this proud title of Universal Provider of Happiness, the Republic forgot into what hands the effective control was falling; and the people at large became the prey of ignoble agents, without sense of dignity or personal honour, concerned only in spoiling the poor or the defenceless rich, and courting the favour of the rank immediately above them in the Hierarchy. *(β) Difficulties of this claim; the bureaucrats out of hand.*

The aim of Justinian was to retrieve the errors of the Constantinian system, which had reduced the *Their insolence and exactions.*

Their insolence and exactions.

prince to a puppet, under pretext of increasing his power, and had zealously extinguished a nobility either of the sword or of the robe. He desired to enhance the dignity of office, to make the wearer conspicuous and therefore open to the influence of public opinion. He was at least well aware of the mockery of the title, "responsible government." He well knew that the emperor alone was really responsible for all his servants' faults; and was held to account for every miscarriage of justice or inequitable tax. Yet the great body of administrators formed a privileged corporation, sworn to defend its members, to deceive the emperor, and to plunder the subjects. To relieve this, Justinian proposed to raise the position of the provincial governor, and to unite under his sole authority the various staffs or retinues (*officium*, *τάξις*), which had secured impunity for petty pilfering in the envious subdivision of control. Something analogous to extra-territorial and foreign-consular jurisdiction would seem to have existed; *ἄσυλον*, *ἄδικοι προστάσιαι*, N. 5 and 6.[1] It is clear that local senators (*ἐπιχώριοι βουλεῦται*) secretly purchased indemnity for wrongdoing and oppressed lowlier neighbours, N. 6.[2] An unjust official as John in the Hellespont could commit great injuries before justice could be taken, N. 37.[3] A vague and impersonal complaint runs through the Constitutions for the provinces, that magistrates and officials oppress the people, N. 53, p. 357,[4] and despise

[1] 534 A.D. *ἀπαγορεῦσαι πᾶσι τοῖς . . . ἐπαρχιῶν ἄρχουσι λόγον ἀσυλίας παρέχειν ἐπὶ δημοσίαις αἰτίαις*, but for private purposes only, and then for a strictly limited period.

[2] He calls it their plot (*ἐπιβουλὴ*), and insolence (*θρασύτης*), whereby they retire to sacred places and defy justice, retaining public moneys in their hands (*τὰ δημόσια ἐν χερσὶ λαμβάνειν, ἔσω ἱερῶν χωρίων ἑαυτοὺς κατακρύπτειν*).

[3] This official on pretext of rate-collections (*πολιτικῶν πόρων ἤτοι . . . σολεμνίων*) went to every length of robbery (*οὐδενὸς ἀπέσχετο τῶν ἐς ἁρπαγὴν ἐσχατὴν ἠκόντων*), bringing his wealth to our blessed city and leaving all penury in Hellespont.

[4] 536 A.D. He raises the status of the Arabian *Moderator*, so that he may defend the subject from the official exactions of subordinates, *ἀντέχεσθαι*

justice, N. 89, p. 494,[1] being themselves the worst offenders, N. 38, p. 227,[2] and N. 44, p. 264.[3] The capital was crowded with litigants, who despaired of redress before any local tribunal, N. 103[4] (II. 44). The rule which obliged a governor to wait in his province fifty days after the expiry of his term was constantly violated, N. 117; and at the very close of

Their insolence and exactions.

τῆς τῶν ἰδιωτῶν ὠφελείας, μὴ συγχωρεῖν τῷ περιβλέπτῳ Δουκὶ μήτε τῷ φυλάρχῳ (the Saracen chief) μήτε τινι τῶν δυνατῶν οἴκων ἀλλὰ μήτε τῷ θείῳ πατριμονίῳ ἢ τοῖς θείοις ἡμῶν πριβάτοις ἢ αὐτῷ τῷ θείῳ ἡμῶν οἴκῳ τὴν οἱ ανοῦν ἐπαγαγεῖν τοῖς ἡμετ. ὑποτέλεσι ζημίαν, μηδὲ κατακλίνεσθαι ῥᾳδίως μηδὲ τρέμειν ἀλλ' ἀνδρείως τῶν ὑπηκόων ἐξηγεῖσθαι. In this important passage Justinian asks him (like the old *Defensor*) to save the subjects from *every* oppression, explicitly naming not merely the military Duke, the Saracen or Bedouin chieftain, the rich landlords with their strong retinues, but the accredited agents of the imperial estates themselves, and, if we are right in so interpreting, even from members of the imperial family: he is to show no respect of persons but stand up boldly against injustice.

[1] 538 A.D. "Justice the unique or basal virtue, without which the others lose their merit, especially that courage to which our ancestral tongue has given the name virtue exclusively (πάτριος φωνή). Ταύτην, he continues, ἐν ταῖς ἡμετ. ἐπαρχίαις ὁρῶντες παρεωραμένην . . . ἀναῤῥῶσαι . . . ᾠήθημεν χρῆναι.

[2] 535 A.D. Wherein he appoints *prætors* for the people of the capital. He restricts the high office (of Stipendiary Magistrate) to the highest rank and most exemplary probity; it is to be given gratuitously, and furnished with a paid assessor (πάρεδρος). We have learned that these officers have hitherto had most undesirable retinues (πρὸς ὑπουργίαν εἶναι τάγματα πονηρὰ λῃστογνώστας τε κ. βενεφιαλίους (poison-experts)), and a crowd of such like who deserve to be punished themselves rather than serve the ends of justice [rendering probably corrupt]. For this class of thief-takers or recognisers exist for no good purpose at all, but they tell the criminals (γινώσκουσι τοὺς κλέπτας) for this one purpose, to hunt profit (and hush-money) for themselves and their officers (who are quite as much to blame). In effect, they resembled the New York police.

[3] Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐπιτρόπων κ. τῶν τρακτευτῶν ὄνομα οὐδ' εἶναι παντελῶς βουλόμεθα (he is remodelling the proconsular government of Cappadocia, 536 A.D.) πρὸς τὰ ἔμπροσθεν βλέποντες παραδείγματα κ. τὴν πολλὴν αὐτῶν ἐπήρειαν ἣν τοῖς ἀθλίοις ἐπῆγον συντέλεσιν.

[4] His language here throws a strange light on the suspicions and dislike shared by prince and people alike towards the official class; εἰ συμβῇ τινι τῶν ἡμετ. ὑπηκόων ἐν ὑποψίᾳ ἔχειν τὸν ἄρχοντα, the bishop must consult with the governor to arrange matters; to prevent costly delay in the capital owing to a well-justified distrust in local equity, ἵνα μὴ ἀπολιμπανόμενοι τῶν ἰδίων πατρίδων κ. αὐτοὶ ἐπὶ ξένης κακοπαθῶσι κ. τὰ πράγματα αὐτῶν βλάπτηται. A special section is devoted to an appeal to the bishop if it happened that any of our subjects suffered injury (ἀδικηθῆναι) at the hands of his excellency the governor himself (λαμπροτάτου).

J. reduces fees payable on institution to office,

his reign, N. 166 (II. 378),[1] Justinian repeats the old indictment of official extortion, and sadly confesses that his efforts have been of little avail. In order to remove all excuse for malversation, he corrects the table of fees payable to court-notaries on promotion, which like the necessary payments before ecclesiastical preferment in the Anglican Church were a constant source of friction and complaint. These fees were now statutably fixed, N. 16 ; an oath against official *Simony* was to be administered, N. 16, 123,[2] and no one was to purchase a post under government, because places of trust were to be gratuitously bestowed on merit, and merit alone. No governor might send a vicar or delegate to exercise his functions, and the emperor wishes to remove and abolish altogether the hated name of *deputy* (τοποτηρήτης), N. 166 (II. 376).[3] Where civil and mili-

abolishes Vicars,

[1] "This too has come to our knowledge (556 A.D.) that some of the governors of provinces are carried along such sacrilegious paths on the plea of filthy lucre that [without fees] they allow neither testaments to be made or published, nor marriage nor interment to take place."

[2] The prototype perhaps of our ecclesiastical oath on Institution to a Benefice: the official swears severally by the Persons of the Trinity, by the Blessed Virgin, by the four Gospels "which I hold in my hands," and by the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, to be a good official, and send away none of the profits to others: ὥσπερ ἄμισθον παρέλαβον τὴν ἀρχὴν, οὕτω κ. καθαρὸς περὶ τοὺς ὑποτελεῖς, satisfied with the stipend apportioned to my office out of public funds.

[3] He prohibits all vicars, βιοκωλῦται, and ληστοδιῶκται. No *political* or *military* official is to perambulate the province without urgent cause (περιϊέναι τὴν ἐπαρχίαν). [These tours or progresses were clearly an infliction.] They are expressly forbidden to burden the subject-class with *corvées* or forced subsidies, μήτε δὲ ἀγγαρείαις ἢ τοῖς καλουμένοις ἐπιδημητικοῖς ἢ ἑτέρᾳ οἱᾳδήποτε ζημίᾳ βαρύνειν τοὺς ἡμετ. ὑποτελεῖς, μήτε δὲ συνηθείας ὀνομάζειν ἢ ζητεῖν . . . καθόλου γὰρ οὐδένα τῶν ἀρχόντων, πολ. τε κ. στρατιωτικῶν, ἐνδημοῦντα κατὰ τὴν χώραν ἔχειν τοποτηρητὴν συγχωροῦμεν. If there must be deputies sometimes, let them at least never be called by this title ; μηδὲ πρόσταξιν μηδ' ὄνομα ἔχετω τοποτηρητοῦ. Twenty years before (535 A.D., N. 16 and 21) he had fulminated against the vicars, as we know, to this effect: οὐδενὶ ἄρχοντι . . . ἐφίεμεν (whether *polit.* or *milit.*) ἐκπεμπειν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι τῆς ἐπαρχίας ἧς ἄρχει τοὺς καλουμ. τοποτηρητάς : those who have the insolence to promote others into their own rank (εἰς τὴν ἑαυτῶν τάξιν ἐμβιβάζειν), will now assuredly be deprived of office. N. 21, § 10, τοποτηρητὰς . . . πᾶσιν ἀπαγορεύομεν τρόποις (here too their

tary offices are thrown together, and the respective retinues united under a single head, the full stipend of each separate office is to be paid to the new and more dignified official, that he may have no occasion to recoup himself by extortion for a paltry pittance, N. 16. Administrators are forbidden to insult the citizens by arrogant pride in rank or military grade (ἀξία, ζώνη); or to sell their favours, N. 16, § 7. He once or twice sums up the chief duties of a governor; first, the inoffensive collection of taxes, next, the maitennance of public order, N. 21,[1] pp. 137–8; and he enlarges these simple instructions into a veritable text-book of an administrator, the *mandata principis*. His whole aim is to raise the standard of virtue and the responsible rank of officials; new titles are invented and old ones revived (NN. 38, 44), and nothing is left outside the jurisdiction of the unique authority; seeing that independent commands artfully created, whether of soldier or publican, had proved a failure, N. 44, p. 270,[2] and had either played into each other's hands or promoted disorder. All these failings of the provincial executive are found again in the long series of Constitutions dealing with the changes of title and power in the chief magistrates of the departments.[3]

raises stipend and dignity of governors.

name is coupled with unruly soldiers in the escort, and oppressive tasks, services, or contributions of the subjects, δαπάνησις, ἀγγαρεία, and § 11 (λεηλατεῖν).

[1] Ἔπειτα (*i.e.* next after the supreme duty of filling the treasury) προσῆκόν ἐστι σὲ προνοεῖν τοῦ μὴ τοὺς δήμους τῶν πόλεων ἐν ἀλλήλοις στασιάζειν; but that peace should prevail everywhere in the cities, from your constantly preserving equal treatment for all our subjects in this respect also, and neither for gain nor any predilection showing marked favour to any party (πρός τι τῶν μερῶν ἀποκλίνειν).

[2] ὑπὸ μίαν γάρ τὸ πρᾶγμα συνάγομεν ἐπὶ τῆς χώρας ἀρχὴν, ἵνα μὴ τῷ διεσπᾶσθαι χωλεύσῃ (he is speaking of Cappadocia).

[3] These *Novels* form the most interesting commentary or supplement to the historians whose meagre details we constantly deplore. At least eighteen are solely devoted to the status of the governor, N. 23 *Pisidia*, 24 *Lycaonia*, 25 *Thrace*, 26 *Isauria*, 31 *Helenopontus*, 32 *Paphlagonia*, 44 *Cappadocia*, 45 the *Armenias*, 52 and 67 the *Isles* (*Cyclades*, &c.), 53 *Arabia*, 54 *Palestine* and *Phenice*, 79 *Sicily*, 96 *Alexandria* and the *Augustal*, 158 *Fontus*, 165 *Phrygia* and *Pisidia*. It is not the purpose of the present work to enter into the details of provincial government

(γ) *Counterpoise to mutinous hierarchy in* (1) *Bishops and* (2) *magnates.*

§ 2. (γ) *Novel Means to Check the Official Agents.*—Justinian sought help from the bishops and chief inhabitants to restrain the civilian peculation or military tyranny. When Justin II. (as we must again remark) asked the local notables to suggest an acceptable governor for their district, he was only following and extending a scheme of which his uncle had set the example. In the same spirit Merwings, or rather their powerful premiers, exempted abbeys and their estates from the direct visit or levy of the Count; and betrayed, like the Roman emperors, their profound distrust of their own nominees. Constantine had wisely seen that the new and unworldly corporation of the Episcopate would be a valuable ally in the difficulties of government, and a useful counterpoise to the emissaries of the central power. To them Justinian entrusted the supervision of his lieutenants; (while he raised *their* dignity, he showed no marked belief in their virtue). Bishops possessed the right, indeed the duty, of formal complaint (N. 103, *passim*); they were to watch and report on the conduct of the governors; they confronted the half-barbarian soldiers, and saw that the peaceful subject suffered no injury, N. 142,[1] 150 (p. 264, 266),[2] N. 164

already well set forth by Professor Bury, H.L.R.E., and by Diehl, in his excellent chapter on the subject of administrative reforms. I hope also to prepare very shortly a detailed inquiry into these and kindred matters in a work dealing with the *Literary Critics of the Roman Empire* from 300–550 A.D.

[1] If a requisition (εἰσπραξιν) has to be made, it must be done without annoyance to the house (μηδαμῶς τοῖς οἴκοις παρενοχλῶν), and soldiers, if they are indispensable, must be old and seasoned, not raw and insolent recruits (μὴ κεχρήσθω νεολέκτοις στρατιώταις ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἐν πράγμασιν τετριμμένοις κ. τὴν πολιτικὴν τάξιν ἐπισταμένοις). The local bishops must see that our will is obeyed; τὴν τῶν εἰρημένων πάντων παραφυλακὴν τοῖς κατὰ τόπον ἐπισκόποις τε κ. ἄρχουσιν ἐπιτρέπει (that is, the emperor; for the novel survives only in a summary of its gist. Athan. xx. 5).

[2] One aggrieved by soldiers must have his wrongs righted by governor and by bishop (apparently acting in concert); if no ruler be found in those parts, he must appeal to the most holy bishop of the city, or to the Ecdic of those country regions under whom the estate lies (ἢ . . . ἐπισκόπῳ

(559),[1] N. 166, 378.[2] They had, indeed, to condescend to "serve tables": for in Italy a curiously assorted committee of Pope and Senate saw to the integrity of weights and measures; while, throughout the empire, bishops were urged to bring to justice and a sense of their guilt those infamous merchants who castrated the young for the service of the court and church, a class which throughout Byzantine history was "always forbidden and always retained."

(γ) *Counterpoise to mutinous hierarchy in* (1) *Bishops and* (2) *magnates.*

Though Justinian was sincerely anxious to secure the help of this order of clerics and notables, he did not venture to suggest any form of *popular control*, such as we attempt to-day with indifferent success. He might seem aware that a democracy prefers to grumble at its petty oppressors, or to laugh enviously at corruption; and in the chaos of creed and race and faction, to which only the empire lent a semblance of unity, a people's painstaking vigilance must have been sought in vain. Genuine democracy is the most difficult and exacting, as well as the most elevated, of all forms of government.

(3) *Popular supervision never suggested.*

ἢ τῷ ἐκδίκῳ τῶν τόπων, κτλ). Justinian ends with ordering the prefect to make known to the bishops and the civil rulers these provisions for the security of the subject-class (ὑπὲρ τῆς αὐτῶν ἀβλαβείας διατυπωθέντα).

[1] This *Pragmatic Sanction* deals with the government of Italy (554 A.D.), and entrusts the nominations of local magistrates to the bishops in conjunction with chief inhabitants (elsewhere called τοῖς πρωτεύουσι). § 12. Provinciarum . . . judices ab *episcopis* et *primatibus* uniuscujusque regionis idoneos eligendos et sufficientes ad locorum admin[m] ex ipsis videlicet jubemus fieri provinciis quos administraturi sint, sine suffragio (mi)-litis. (The justice must be a native of the district, and be guaranteed competent by his chief neighbours, ecclesiastical and secular; and the *soldier* must have no share in his appointment (?),—if we accept the plausible correction of Zacharias.)

[2] πᾶσαν δὲ δίδομεν ἄδειαν τοῖς κατὰ τὸν τόπον ὁσιωτάτοις ἐπισκόποις κ. τοῖς πρωτεύουσι τῶν πόλεων τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐγχειρήματα κωλύειν . . . κ. τὰ περὶ τούτων ἡμῖν μηνύειν. Sometimes the local squire or magnate is told off to spy upon the civil servant; sometimes the governor is armed with ample powers against these provincial grandees with their armed followings (δορύφοροι) and their insolence and injuries to the poor. But the bishop is always trusted to prevent wrong and report infringement of rights to the anxious emperor.

(3) *Popular supervision never suggested.*

The Roman Empire was founded in a cynical moment by a master of irony, who saw through human nature with a keenness given to few. Democratic in aim it certainly was, in that loose sense current in our own days, which implies that measures are directed for the public welfare without respect of class or privilege, and aim especially at the contentment and comfort of the poor. But the empire had no illusion whatever about democracy, in its high and ideal sense, which in truth is the only one admissible. It had no belief in the popular capacity for the long strain and never-ending duties of the republican. The people at large placed not the slightest value on constitutional privilege. They desired to be rid of a host of bad masters and incompetent rulers; but they had no intention whatever of taking their places. They knew very well what they wanted from government; and in the long and perhaps surfeited silence of these centuries, we may well suppose they were satisfied with their bargain. The consideration of the imperial system for the lower classes is well known. They are to be amused as well as fed, and delighted by the gorgeous spectacle of circus, theatre, and court function. The ruined cities of Northern Africa clearly show that one chief duty of the smallest municipality, founded in defiance of natural law among the sands, was to provide for the cleanliness and amusement of the populace. Christianity had not, it would appear, conferred on these classes a marked aptitude for self-government; it had, according to some critics, merely made representative institutions impossible. It might (so they allege) have been possible to agree on the need of sanitation, public baths, and public spectacles; but if the province of government and imperial concern is to be extended to the problems of the next world, it is clearly out of the question to allow the voice of the heterodox to be heard or to respect minorities.

Imperial attitude to the people, cynical but indulgent.

The people's part was to trust their supreme ruler and representative to do his best for them on pain of dismissal. They were not to be deprived of those costly shows, which since republican times had exhausted noble houses by the vain parade of a moment: Justinian introduced a welcome thrift into these expensive dignities, and limited the consular largess, just as a Puritan and Labour Ministry might curtail the Lord Mayor's Show. But he was careful not to abolish these spectacles entirely, N. 81, p. 468,[1] and when the last vestige of republican office disappeared in Byzantium, the place of the magistrates' displays was taken by the unceasing liturgy and ceremonial of the court. (1) *Costly display for gratification of urban mob;*

Yet with all this consideration for the "cockney" element, Justinian does not forget the needs of the peasant (N. 123, 139, 148 are devoted to the various problems of agriculture and ownership[2]). And to all dependent classes of his empire he explicitly interdicts the use of arms, N. 108,[3] and has no sympathy with the higher wages for craftsman and artisan, which they demanded after the Great (2) *solicitude for country men;* (3) *wages of artisan.*

[1] "*On the Consular Largess.*" He limits this scattering of dole to seven occasions of pompous exit, *εἰ γὰρ τοῦτο ἐπινενόηται διὰ τὸ τὰς θέας πρὸς ψυχαγωγίαν ἄγειν τὸν δῆμον . . . οὐδενὸς τούτων ὁ ἡμετ. ἀπεστερηθήσεται δῆμος.*

[2] Especially in *Novel* 29 does he forbid the seizure of land for debt; and fixes (or attempts to fix) the rate of usury for advances on landed security.

[3] *On Arms* (539 A.D., addressed to Basilides, *Mag. Off.*). The aim is, of course, the prevention of civic tumult, not suspicion of insurrection (*ἀβλαβεῖς κ. ἀνεπηρεάστους φυλάττειν κ. κωλύειν τοὺς πολέμους, οὓς ἐκ τῆς ἐαυτῶν ἀβουλίας αἱρούμενοι τοὺς κατ' ἀλλήλων ἐργάζονται φόνους*). The manufacture of weapons is a State monopoly which may be invaded by no private person; and no one but authorised soldiers or sergeants with license may possess; § 3. *ἄδεια παντελῶς οὐδενί . . .* "neither to private inhabitants of cities nor husbandmen tilling the country districts (*τοῖς τὰ χώρια γεωργοῦσιν ἀγρόταις*) to use arms against each other and dare murders, while the exchequer is despoiled of the taxes of those who cultivate the soil, deserting their livelihood (?) or running away through panic." This was no idle fear; the armed households of the great, and masterless retainers (as in Japan, the *lonin* or ownerless *yaconin*) caused disturbance on the countryside. § 4 gives a list of prohibited weapons; somewhat in the style of the Philistine edict in the time of Saul.

(3) *wages of artisan.*

Plague, N. 146 (544 A.D.); just as in Western Europe, after the Black Death, some 800 years later. —The emperor has been sternly rebuked for both these regulations; matters, as the unbiassed student can easily see, of strict political necessity. Circus-frays and the Samaritan revolt had made men familiar with private feuds and *vendetta*. It was impossible, with the barbarian at the gate, to allow mere factious turbulence. The compassion of liberal or nationalist historians is entirely wasted on a people, or rather a congeries of peoples, who had long ago resigned the noble duty of self-defence. Justinian, who had no reason to trust party-spirit, who had manifest proof of religious and tribal rancour, was in every way justified in this prohibition. Nor can we criticise from any modern standpoint his (possibly futile) attempt to fix the scale of wages or the interest on mortgage-loans. Whenever the State is recognised as omnipotent by popular consent, the Government—Imperial or Socialist—will be compelled to take cognisance of such things. Where every class looks to the State for guidance, aid, and authorisation; where nothing passes current without the peculiar stamp of government sanction; various restrictions on a perilous liberty must be both expected and tolerated. The hours of labour, the scale of payment, the price of commodities, the value of land, the assessment of appreciated estates—all must be submitted to some final control and central committee. It is not for us to blame the empire for a system which, amid some misgivings and protest, is being adopted by many statesmen "as a panacea for the evils of Freedom."[1]

Wisdom of these provisions.

Striking analogy with modern Socialism.

[1] N. 60 (537 A.D.), the emperor is obliged to limit the number of privileged manufactories in Constantinople to eleven hundred, and to beg the residue to pay their imposts regularly: he says, not without reason, τῷ κατὰ μικρὸν κ. ἐφ' ἅπαντας ἠπλῶσθαι τὰ τέλη βραχὺ μὲν ἔσται τὸ παρ' ἑκάστου διδόμενον, μέτριον δὲ κ. κοῦφον . . . ξσῳ παρὰ πλειόνων συλλεγέν He did not intend to fall into the later Merovingian dilemma, when the

§ 3. It remains to speak briefly of a few classes in the State on which the Novels of Justinian shed perhaps a gleam of sombre light. (1) The *military element* is set in vivid contrast with the civilians. The emperor is much concerned to prevent unfair pressure on the district where soldiers are quartered; they must be content with the produce of their cantonment, and not demand exotic luxuries from other provinces; they must be considerate to the defenceless citizens whom it is their duty to defend, not to oppress (N. 138, 142, 150). Justinian is aware of the debt which the Commonwealth owes to its gallant (and often alien) defenders: after heaven, the empire rests on their loyalty and devotion (*cf.* the use of the term *καθωσιωμένοι*). He is anxious, too, that his barbarian allies should learn to respect the rights of civilians, just as Theodoric had to defend the effeminate Roman noble from the good-humoured contempt of his Gothic "protector" (N. 150, II. 265).[1] He does not hesitate to rebuke this dangerous element if it deserves it; he threatens (N. 96, I. 540)[2] some mutinous soldiers with expatriation to the detested Danubian frontier, or the Crimea, still more remote; it will not be forgotten that this punishment precipitated the military revolution which overthrew Maurice some sixty-four years later.

Special classes: (1) The Military.

sovereign,—knowing no means of defending the public except by restricting his own officers' jurisdiction, of rewarding his friends except by lavish grant of practical immunity,—found himself in the end without subjects, taxes, or kingdom.

[1] "These injunctions we desire to be carefully observed in the passage, not merely of our own Captains and their troops, but of all other forces sent by us into alliance with our Commonwealth from any nation whatever" (*ἐξ οἱουδήποτε ἔθνους εἰς συμμαχίαν . . . πεμπομένων*).

[2] "Their splendid tribunes shall suffer confiscation, and their chief men (let these also beware of decapitation!) and the whole regiment shall be removed to the furthest limits of the Danubian district, there to serve their term patiently as guard of the frontier" (*τὸ πᾶν τάγμα μεταστὰν ἐν τοῖς πορρωτέρω τοῦ . . . Δανυβίου τόποις . . . . παραφυλακῆς ἕνεκα προσκαρτερῆσον*).

(2) *The Monks.*

§ 4. The emperor is frequently engrossed in *monastic* questions, relating to the order and discipline of monks in their religious houses. If the monks will pray, the soldiers will fight well, and the Roman armies will win peace for the world. There is an especially mediæval touch here; and we recall the opening chapter of Lydus (which he does not follow up) dealing with the identity of the magistrate, the priest, and the soldier in primitive times.

(3) *The Senate.*

§ 5. There is frequent reference to the *Senatorial class* as well as to the *Senate* of New Rome. Both in Latin and Greek (N. 80, 81)[1] he explains the transference to the emperor of the anxious duties of executive, and makes much of the dignified retirement, which all enjoy but the select emissaries of Cæsar. He takes care that "senatorial estates shall remain in senatorial families" (NN. 101, 106, 109). He gives rules for the release from the duties of this rank (τυχὴ, N. 90), the old Latin *venia ordinis;* but he will not allow Jews and Samaritan senators to evade their responsibility (N. 62), though they might not exercise their privileges. He is anxious to preserve the deferential distinctions of rank, though he will not have this carried to an absurd extreme. For example, the *illustrious* class (N. 91) were often reduced to poverty and unable to support their dignity; all but the most exalted were expressly relieved of the duty of employing an *advocate* (ἐντολεὺς) when sustaining a suit, and might appear and plead in person, if they could not afford the heavy fees, which, the joy of Lydus' heart, were a bane and a grievance to a pauper nobility. Yet Justinian is clear that disorder in a State arises when men overstep the natural limits of caste, and the due

[1] "In the most ancient days the Senate's authority shone forth so bravely that by its guidance at home and abroad the whole world was made subject to the yoke of Rome . . . for by its common counsel all things were carried out. But after that the prerogative of Roman people and Senate, in a happy moment for the general welfare (*felicitate* Reipublicæ) were transferred to the Imperial Majesty," &c.

reverence owing to rank is set at naught (ἀξιωμάτων ὑβριζομένων). (3) *The Senate.*

§ 6. The *social* and *administrative* condition of the empire has already exhausted more than the space allotted to it; nor have the various questions of the country *magnates*, the *vindices*, the *ecdics*, the *Defensor*, been treated adequately. We may well conclude this section, already over-long, by quoting a direct personal appeal to his subjects; wherein he exposes the genuine anxiety with which he attempts to conciliate two ends, unhappily incompatible—the welfare of the people and the maintenance of the costly imperial system. (N. 16, § 10: "It is right that you our subjects and contributories, knowing how great is the care and forethought we bestow on you, should in all cheerfulness pay your public taxes, and not need compulsion from the rulers,—and show us by your deeds that you return due gratitude to us for our loving-kindness. Then shall ye reasonably enjoy from your rulers all care and consideration for your cheerful service; knowing this well, that since on the rulers' shoulder rests the whole peril of the State,[1] and it is admitted that they take office at their own risk, it is your part therefore to abstain in every way from sullen churlishness, and not in your disobedience oblige them to have recourse to their lawful sternness, with which it is but right they should be invested, seeing that the collection of the public revenue is a necessity which cannot be gainsaid. (4) *Justinian's appeal to his people.*

"Listen then, subjects of mine, whomsoever God has given to our ancestors or to ourselves (N. 89, 538 A.D.), that we issue this law to give and provide you with all security: ye shall not journey long and toilsome ways, ye shall not weep over the injuries of the great, nor shall ye blame us that we neglect to help you. But each one, seeing close at hand and under his own eyes due punishment and

[1] Or responsibility for the taxes, δημόσια.

(4) *Justinian's appeal to his people.*

requital waiting for all his wrongs, will sing aloud the great and good God, who enlightened my understanding so as to issue these wise laws." Such was the aim and such the scope of Justinian's legislation: his failure to attain this end must be traced to causes of which he himself was but dimly conscious, and over which he could exert no effective control.

CHAPTER III

THE ELEMENTS OF OPPOSITION UNDER THE SUCCESSORS OF JUSTINIAN (565–618)

(Being a continuation of "The Prince, the Senate, and the Civil Service")

Opposition of privileged class to Liberal Imperialism.

§ 1. THE death of Justinian was a signal, long awaited, for the smouldering discontent to break into flame. It existed no doubt in nearly all classes of a commonwealth called upon to give up much for imperialism, and receive perhaps little in return. But the chief seat of the influence which thwarted the central control was now the Senate. The hindrance to the designs of a benevolent autocrat was found among his own ministers; and once more was displayed to the world the peril of a privileged class, concentrating in itself the whole power and talent of the State. It is a palpable anachronism to connect this with monarchical institutions. The history of mankind shows clearly that a monarchy, even as a foreign victor, gives to a people national self-consciousness, and guarantees them from servitude to "many and fierce masters." "The truth is," writes Mr. Price in an introduction to Thierry's great work, "that to the Norman Conquest we owe both our national unity and our national institutions. . . . England was overcome by the Normans because she possessed no national unity. . . . Had not Anglo-Saxon feudalism been uprooted by the centralised despotism of the conqueror, England would probably be broken into independent States, like Germany and Italy; or like France have been forced, at the close of the Middle Ages, to exchange anarchy for despotism." The

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committee of Platonic Guardians, the Knights of Rhodes, the Brahmin or Roman hierarchy, the Russian official, even the Anglo-Indian civil servant, and above all, the secret influences of a monopolist republic (such as floats as an ideal before the dreamer's vision)—these are instances of the temptation which besets the most conscientious as well as the most unscrupulous of rulers. The pages of Laurence the Lydian show us the persecution of the rich by the pretorian prefect, the "war against private wealth," so conspicuous in political programmes to-day. But in the later years of Justinian, the rich, identified with the imperial council and exercising power by right of official dignity as well as private means, gained in weight (and perhaps in solidarity), and like the republican senate domineered over a subject world. We are often called upon to record the grievances of the noble class under the firm control of monarchs; we trace with regret the mutual suspicions which so often transformed the Senate into the victim of a persecutor. But when once the stern hand is relaxed, our sympathy is at once estranged; and we feel that for the peace and welfare of the world, the "feudal" rule of Senators was neither to be regretted nor recalled. Law was no longer uniform and supreme; a large class of higher and lower officials demanded exemption. Justin II. endeavoured to enforce the law at all hazards; and offered himself as the first example, if he deserved censure. "To him," says Zonaras, "came one promising if he were made prefect with power over all for a fixed time, no sufferer should be found" (*εἰ ἔπαρχος γένοιτο κ. κατὰ πάντων ἐξουσία δοθείη δὶ ὡρισμένου καιροῦ μήτινα εὑρεθῆναι τὸν ἀδικούμενον*). The story, it would seem, is clearly apocryphal in its details; it finds its original or suspicious parallel in the "Arabian Nights"; and we may be sure that such a sudden elevation to the prefecture of the city was not possible with the

careful routine and rules of methodical promotion which then prevailed. "As he sat in judgment one came with a charge against a very notable senator (*τῶν ἐπισημοτέρων συγκλητικῶν ἕνα*), whom he summoned to appear; but he refused (*μετεκαλ ἐσατο . . . ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπήντησεν*)—a second notice fared no better; and the accused, scorning it, went off to dine with the emperor (*δεύτερον ἔθετο μήνυμα . . . καταφρονήσας εἰς τὸ βασιλικὸν ἀπῆει συμπόσιον*). When he learnt this, the prefect went to the palace and found the king sitting with his guests and spoke: 'I promised, O king, to leave not one wrong-doer, and my promise I will keep, if thou wilt lend the support; but if thou dost shield and entertain the unjust, I can do nothing. Give them not liberty to scorn the law, or take back my charge.' And the king said, 'If I am he, make me descend from my seat and obey the summons' (*τοῦτο . . . ἀνυσθήσεται εἰ καὶ τὴν ἐκ τοῦ κράτους σου ἐπικουρίαν ἔχω κ. τὴν ῥοπήν· εἰ δὲ μᾶλλον αὐτὸς τῶν ἀδικούντων ἀντιποιῇ κ. φιλίως αὐτοῖς διακείμενος συνεστιωμένους ἔχεις οὐδέν μοι ἔσται ἀνύσιμον· ἢ γοῦν μὴ μεταδίδου παρρησίας αὐτοῖς ἢ παῦσόν με τῆς ἀρχῆς; κ. ὁ βασιλεὺς εἰ αὐτὸς ἐγώ εἰμι, φησιν, ἀδικῶν, ἐξανάστησόν με ἐντεῦθεν*). "Then the prefect made the man accused rise from his place and follow him, and finding him guilty chastised him with stripes, and to the man aggrieved he gave back out of the other's estate the exaction many times over. So that the greedy were afraid and came to terms with those they had wronged" (*γνοῦς ἀδικοῦντα . . . ἐκόλασε ταῖς εἰς σῶμα πληγαῖς . . . ὅθεν δεισάντες οἷς ἦν προαίρεσις πλεονεκτικὴ τοῦ ἀδικεῖν ἀνεστάλησαν κ. τοῖς ἠδικημένοις εἰς συμβάσεις ἐχώρησαν*). Such, then, is the story; it no doubt reflects the current tradition or the character of Justin II. and his courtiers. We find a parallel in the story of Butelinus under Heraclius; and the career of Theophilus offers points of resemblance. The colouring is later and almost purely Asiatic, but the

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plain facts are credible (Zonaras, xiv. 10). The historian has a favourable opinion of the Illyrian emperor (Ἰλλυριός . . . εἰς ἅπαντα περιδέξιος τὴν γνώμην μεγαλοψυχος). Theophanes has τῷ γένει Θρᾴξ μεγαλόψυχός τε κ. ἐπιδέξιος. As we can trace some part at least of the decline to the old age and relaxed energy of Justinian; so the impunity of evil-doers is referred to the seclusion of Justin through ill-health (νοσεροῦ τυχὼν σώματος . . . διὰ τοῦτο μὴ συνεχῶς προϊὼν . . . ὡς μηδενὸς ὄντος τοῦ ἐκδικοῦντος ἀδεεστέρους ἐποίησε). Once when he went forth he was much harassed by applicants for redress of wrong (πότε προελθὼν ἠνωχλήθη παρὰ πολλῶν ὡς ἀδικουμένων), whence the avenging of the oppressed was to him a subject of anxious thought (ἡ τῶν ἀδικουμένων ἐκδίκησις διὰ φροντίδος). We are reminded of Marcian's "*Catervæ adeuntium infinitæ*," throngs of applicants with a grievance. The account of Scylitzes of the same episode agrees in the general outline, and argues a common source; he particularises the culprit as μάγιστρός τις.

Dying avowal of Justin II.: reforming zeal powerless.

§ 2. Theophanes, who does not give the legend of the temporary vizier, gives in full Justin's speech at the adoption of Tiberius Constantine, to which we have called attention in the text: it was taken down by shorthand writers (John of Ephesus), and forms a very human document, widely differing in its naïve simplicity from the studied and eloquent orations usually put into the mouth of princes by classical historians. I will quote only the more salient points: μὴ ἐπιχαρῇς αἵμασι. μὴ ἐπικοινωνῇς φόνων. μὴ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδώσῃς. μὴ εἰς ἔχθραν ὁμοιωθῇς ἐμοί· ἐγὼ γὰρ ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἔπταισα. καὶ γὰρ πταιστὴς ἐγενόμην, κ. ἀπελαβον κατὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας μου. ἀλλὰ δικάσομαι τοῖς ποιήσασί μοι τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος τοῦ Χτοῦ. μὴ ἐπάρῃ σε τοῦτο τὸ σχῆμα ὡς καὶ ἐμέ. οὕτω πρόσεχε πᾶσιν ὡς ἑαυτῷ. γνῶθι τίς ἦς κ. τίς νῦν εἶ . . . ὅλοι οὗτοι τέκνα σου εἰσὶν κ. δοῦλοι. . . . τούτους οὓς βλέπεις ὅλους τῆς πολιτείας βλέπεις. προσέχε τῷ

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στρατιώτῃ σου. μὴ φάντας [στρατιώτας] δέξῃ. μὴ εἴπωσιν σοί τινες ὅτι ὁ πρὸ σοῦ οὕτω διεγένετο. ταῦτα γὰρ λέγω μαθὼν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθον. οἱ ἔχοντες οὐσίας, ἀπολαυέτωσαν αὐτῶν, τοῖς δὲ μὴ ἔχουσι δώρησαι. The version of Theophylact (iii. 11, ed. de Boor, 133) repeats almost verbatim, but in place of the meaningless [στρατιώτας] we read συκοφάντας; he also omits οὓς before βλέπεις. And the general sense of the passage? In these broken words Justin warns Tiberius against his own errors: "Be not made like me in the people's hatred (=do not incur my unpopularity). I have sinned and been led astray, and I will accuse those who have brought me to this at the Last Day. Do not be elated by your position; remember what you once were and what you are now; and look at me, what I have been and what I have become! These before you are your children and servants. You see them all before you,—all the members of the civil order. Do not neglect your soldiers; welcome no informers. Do not be led away by the guile of those who tell you, 'His late majesty always did this and that.' Learn wisdom by my sad failure. Let those who have wealth continue to enjoy; and give to such as are in need." Now the charges are vague, and the melancholy Justin, appeased like Saul with cunning playing on the harp, must not be held to the letter of a suspicious temperament conscious of a great opportunity lost. But he blames his advisers for his faults; and points with emphasis to the subordinate position of the ministers and clergy standing round. The πολιτεία comprises the ranks of the civil hierarchy, just as later πολιτικὸς is opposed to στρατιωτικός. One is much tempted to read some "caution" into the double βλέπεις; beware of, "you do well to look at them." I translate σοι in its usual meaning, "to thee," not "of thee" with Bury; and am inclined to attach considerable weight to the sentence. Can we not read in the text just that

Dying avowal of Justin II.: reforming zeal powerless.

insistence on precedent, which is one of the most entangling of silken meshes cast by bureaucracy round the vigorous limbs of a reforming sovereign? Any administrator will recognise the tone of the permanent Under-Secretary in the words: "We never did so in Mr. X.'s time." For bureaucrats have a fabulous golden age (like poor Laurentius), to which standard they coldly refer the proposals of the new minister, and are apt, with Talleyrand, to discourage zeal. In the final words we may discover that, where private wealth still existed apart from the privileged order, it was insecure; and that Justin had learnt by bitter experience that the "government" was always "against the people." Theophylact supplies us with a sonorous and periphrastic description of the audience before which this adoption was made. We remember Galba's hesitation in a similar case, and the ominous last decision, "iri in *castra* placuit." Here we find Senate, clergy, and patriarch assembled (*τῆς συγκλήτου βουλῆς ἐς ταὐτὸν γενομένης τοῦ τε ἱερατικοῦ καταλόγου . . . ἅμα τῷ ἐπιστατοῦντι κ. τὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας πηδάλια διαθύνοντι*). (We may remark that our author makes a very needless apology for the simplicity of Justin's words, which he will leave in all their naked and unpolished rudeness: their heartfelt sincerity is a very welcome oasis in the desert of his elaborate periods.) Against this solid phalanx of indurate tradition or individual greed, what weapons did a *comes excubitorum* possess, suddenly raised to the throne by one who made no concealment of his own failure? It is small wonder that Tiberius Constantine continued this apologetic and deprecatory tone, and sought to conciliate favour by gifts, not as Justin advised, to the really poor, but to the powerful or independent.

Conciliation of local authorities.

§ 3. We may deal subsequently with the eulogy of Corippus, and the debt that Africa owed to the Questor Anastasius and the Emperor Justin II. Yet

this keen interest in a freshly recovered province is typical also of his entire policy; and I may be allowed to quote the words of Diehl (*L'afr. Byz.*, 458), because I feel sure that this partial reform in an outlying district was of a piece with a genuine attempt at a universal reorganisation: "A l'intérieur du pays, l'administration des finances reorganisées s'efforçait par une meilleure perception de l'impôt d'assurer les rentes necessaires aux dépenses (*Novella*, 149, A.D. 569); pour réprimer la cupidité des fonctionnaires on remettait en honneur les vieilles régles relatives à l'obtention gratuite des magistratures; pour arrêter leurs insolences, on rappelait à tous les agents, civils et militaires, le respect dû aux privilèges de l'Eglise et à la personne des evêques; officiellement on invitait les prélats à adresser au prince toutes les observations qui leur sembleraient utiles, 'afin (dit le rescrit impérial) que connaissant la vérité nous décidions ce qu'il convient de faire.' (Zach., *Nov.* iii. 9, 10) (A.D. 568). *Hortamur cujusque provinciæ sanctissimos episcopos, eos etiam qui inter possessores et incolas principatum tenent, ut per communem supplicationem ad potentiam nostram eos deferant, quos ad administrationem provinciæ suæ idoneos existiment.*" I may also subjoin the admirable words of Bury (ii. 75): "A remarkable law of Justin (568) is preserved in which he yields to the *separatist* tendencies of the provinces to a certain extent; it provides that the governor of each province should be appointed without cost at the request of the bishops, landowners and [principal] inhabitants . . . it was a considerable concession in the direction of *local* government, and its importance will be more fully recognised if it is remembered that Justinian had introduced in some provinces the practice of investing the *civil* governor (who held judicial as well as administrative power) with military authority also. It is a measure which sheds much light on the state of the empire, and reminds us of that attempt of Honorius to give *representative local* government to the

Conciliation of local authorities.

Episcopate as a counterpoise.

Episcopate as a counterpoise.

cities in the south of Gaul,—a measure that came too late to cure the political lethargy which prevailed." I would only suggest that the word *separatist* is perhaps too strong; it is one of Finlay's beliefs that this desire for honesty in local administration was disloyal and centrifugal. I cannot myself be satisfied that there was any desire to detach from the parent-trunk or set up an independent home-rule. The only safeguard was in imperial and central control against the abuses of men who, like viceroys of old time, regarded a post of trust as a prize, and sought a convenient opportunity for reimbursing the price paid to secure it. We may be sure that this appeal to local feeling and choice vanished in the gradual collapse of the civil system up to the time of Heraclius. We have quoted this passage, however, not to encroach on the interesting problems of local autonomy or prince-bishoprics under the empire, but to show the earnest desire of Justin II. to maintain the best side of autocracy. The *Novel* emphasises the large admixture of the clergy in the ordinary body of government, as well as its presence on ceremonious occasions. This influence grew and culminated in the days of Heraclius; and the patriarchs of Constantinople and of Alexandria seemed to have claimed no small authority on high politics and finance. But as the Eastern realm had avoided the dangerous support of a Barbarian protectorate, so it refused to allow the State to become a mere department of the Church. With all its faults, it managed to fulfil the modern maxim of all political theorists,—the supremacy of the *civil* power against *sword* and *dogma*. Both these dangers of western and mediæval Europe recur in a variety of forms; but during our period there is no concession to the independent claim of priest and soldier. The Iconoclastic movement was largely a recurrence to a pre-Constantinian policy. And it was this temporising scheme of Constantine, which, in the age we are now

discussing, bade fair to overthrow the central fabric. Powerful prelates and recalcitrant nobles,—here are two well-known types of feudalism; and Justin II., with all his desire for improvement, had to conciliate and to make use of such agents as he found ready. *Episcopate as a counter-poise.*

§ 4. The dim records of the reigns of Tiberius II. (578–582) and Mauricius (582–602) (who break the line of Illyrian princes) are fitfully illumined by the tropes and similes of Evagrius or Theophylact. Tiberius indeed found a support for the throne in the *demes;* Maurice reverted to the help of the *nobles* pending his struggle with an inefficient and seditious army. The latter need mean nothing more than that he kept the civilian supremacy intact, and in the end yielded to their protests, by a rapid return from a campaign which he proposed to lead in person. Historians attempt to give these detached points of disaffection, union and focus in a legendary public opinion, which is depicted as austere and unanimous. Finlay specially oscillates between extremes; he complains of the now limited efficacy of absolutism, or he represents hostility to the government as widespread, popular, and deserved. It is, I think, true that this latter never seriously existed; when we read of the "threatened conflict between official privilege and popular feeling," or of the "hate inspired by the administration," we are apt to imagine a concrete and wholesome body of opinion,—born no doubt in the higher and idealist circles (where all revolutions begin), and filtering down, until all classes are allied in opposition to the ruling system. It may well be doubted if such a desirable state of things ever existed. No country has ever been united against its rulers; a successful overthrow is the work of just that small minority which has the courage of its views and a well-defined programme of attack. The removal of a king, the exile of a noble caste, merely unveils the seething animosities of classes; and after any change of government, the larger but silent *Isolation of the emperor: no public support.*

Isolation of the emperor: no public support.

portion of the citizens regret the past. In the curious circumstances of the empire in the closing years of the sixth century, there is no trace of serious opposition or of unanimity. Far less are we likely to discover a vestige of a rival constitution.

No desire to restrict titular prerogative.

§ 5. The noble party, the "Senators," were profoundly interested in the resolute maintenance of autocracy. Neither then nor in the Twenty Years' Anarchy (695–717) is there a sign of later Whig proposal to restrict prerogative. But they determined that the sovereign should be a creature, and that a still unlimited prerogative should lie in their hands. Nor were they at one upon the right method of government. The dominant class had lost that wider interest and public spirit which marked its councils a century ago. Each member of a disintegrating order sought his own good at the expense of the whole; alone the emperor, "*Athanasius contra mundum*," had a policy. This selfish and antinomian individualism ran through the classes; and perhaps only among the priests rose to pride in a corporation, for which they demanded independence. Neither religious dispute nor the factions of the hippodrome show any serious criticism of the aims or manner of administration. It is in vain to seek for earnestness of purpose or combined action. Political interest was soon exhausted in a vague and scornful discontent, or in personal rancour and petty spite directed against conspicuous men. Finlay oddly represents the exempt classes of "monks, charioteers, and usurers" as successfully claiming to be above the law. Now the unique justification of insurgence would lie in this demand, to make the law just and uniform and to submit the highest power in the land to its requirements. To oppose (as in Russia to-day) an autocracy, largely guided by precedent and custom and irregular only in the minor malversations of petty agents, by a complete anarchy,—is a grotesque ambition, on a par

with the buccaneering sympathies of delicately nurtured childhood, their fearful delight in pirate and highwayman, but not to be classed with serious schemes of political reconstruction. The whole claim of Liberalism (so far indeed as it makes itself articulate and intelligible) is that the personal whim shall everywhere yield to the impersonal or general welfare,—that law shall fetter arbitrary despotism, and calm debate shall fix the lines of government and the principles of justice. No one is clearer than Finlay himself in making this demand, in showing the inconsistency of those well-meaning princes, who while they tried to save autocracy from itself did not provide an "Ephorate" or a "Body of Censors" to guarantee the supremacy of the impersonal. Now can it for a moment be maintained that this disinterested deference to law, absolutely essential in a free State, was in the air at this time? Is not the sole claim of each individual, of each class, each district, each sect, to be "above the law"? Is not the emperor struggling in classic and statuesque isolation for the archaic principles against pure subjectivity? The green or blue faction, the monks of a certain community, the citizens or sectaries of a distant province, might, like the Nihilist to-day, do and suffer loyally in the supposed interest of a fraction of the State; but a more comprehensive view of the whole was for ever denied to them. When this particularist spirit had invaded the once catholic sphere of the Senate, the case of the State became hopeless. Nothing could prevent the splitting into heterogeneous and unsympathetic groups, social and regional. And this without any matured plan or purpose of autonomy. For we must again repeat that the popular interest was confined to an alert criticism of persons, rarely of measures; and while it rejoiced in every change of ruler, never elevated itself to a calm survey or judgment of the whole system.

Private interest and contempt for law.

Complete failure of Maurice to restore order (600).

§ 6. "Maurice," it is said with truth, "causes a revolution by attempting to re-establish the ancient authority of the imperial administration." But we must be careful how we interpret this. The secret of the Augustan "constitution" (if we give this explicit name to his crafty yet beneficent compromise) lay in the control of officials: the one perennial difficulty which meets us under all governments and is quite independent of the form of constitution.

We do not mean that the already absolute powers of the administrator were to be increased; that the helpless autocrat should have a useless addition of formal prerogative, the subordinate agents supplied with larger authority. Maurice desired in a corrupt and centrifugal society to restore order and control; and when law is openly despised or in abeyance, nothing avails but strong personal power, which for the time is the sole remedy. Limited on all sides by "rapacious nobles," an idle populace, a turbulent faction, and a "licentious army," the prince saw no hope but in the energetic exercise of his theoretical but latent force. A despondent tone rings with dismal monotony through this period, and finds an echo in the legends of imperial dreams, warnings, and expiations. The emperor, forced back on the natural supporters of the throne, found no aid forthcoming. Had he tried, in his endeavour to enlist his subjects' help in the work of reform, to establish a responsible council or representative body, as we might suggest to-day, there was no guarantee that this responsibility, this representative character should be maintained. It was not to be expected that such a body would be free from the factious group-spirit, the narrow and religious bitterness, the personal rancour or self-seeking,—already conspicuous in all ranks of general society. It does not follow that out of a disorderly and disaffected chaos held artificially together, like Russia to-day, a sovereign assembly will be more patriotic, united, or disinter-

ested than the society it represents. It will rather be the focus of the national feuds, the quintessence of the national disorder. And it is an unvarying experience that the tone of parliaments is below the average level of public opinion ; and is singularly unfitted to express the higher and more liberal outlook. The decisive factor in the situation turned out to be the very influence against which Maurice had reacted, —the party-spirit of the circus. To those who know human nature (not through supposed representatives, but directly) there is nothing alarming in this appeal to the rudimentary judgment of the average man. The half-constitutional influence oddly bestowed in the last reign had perhaps a good effect ; the factions were wanting neither in spirit nor in a certain generosity. But the experiment of making an urban mob the arbiter of national destiny has proved a signal failure. The turbulence of the capital, easily stirred by a chance word, a clever epigram, or an imprudent edict, carries off with it as a reluctant partner of its often sanguinary triumph the silent common sense and sober judgment of the provinces. Republican Paris has in this matter no advantage over despotic Byzantium ; and indeed, in spite of religious cruelty, the annals of the people throughout our epoch contrast favourably with those of most other European capitals. Their infrequent intervention is generally creditable and their tumult easily curbed. Yet it was impossible then, as now, to entrust the business of the State, either in crisis or routine, to average good-will or boisterous good-nature.

Complete failure of Maurice to restore order (600).

Intervention of the demes.

§ 7. The Senate retires, so far as the annalists tell us, into a discreet and possibly corrupt and powerful obscurity during the twenty years of Maurice's reign. They emerge only to be grossly deceived. The new factor decides, and the people are supreme. Senate and Patriarch Cyriac were asked to come out to the Hebdomon to witness the elevation of Germanus ; and to their dismay behold

Official tradition extinguished under Phocas.

Official tradition extinguished under Phocas.

Phocas crowned! It is the *demes* who support, intimidate, or openly insult the imperial centurion, and we are reminded by their delightful frankness of the genuine if unauthorised influence which a mob can exercise in a despotic State. Again, it is the *demes* who welcome the deliverer from Africa, deprived of political status by Phocas; and it is the *demes* again who join gladly in hewing "Agag in pieces before the Lord." We may suspect that, in the savage inquiries into plots and conspiracies, the Senate, the civil and official class, as the suspected supporters of the Maurician régime, had suffered most. And perhaps this curious period of disintegration and delay could not have found a more suitable hero or climax than in Phocas. He represents, what I believe to have been widely spread, a mere ignorant and capricious subjectivity; which so far from demanding the submission of all classes to law merely seeks to be itself emancipated. Alone in the fifteen centuries of Roman rule, there is no vestige of policy in palace or council-chamber. In these years only does the imperial dignity sink to the level of some malevolent and suspicious monarch of the East, living like a threatened wild beast in a dim and noisome lair and sending forth only groans of rage and hatred. His reign is the apotheosis of a rude and blustering feudalism, without conception of duty, equity, or the trust of office. It is, I think, possible to extricate out of the scandalous gossip that does duty for history under the late empire, and even with the earlier Cæsars, some thread of earnest and serious work and deliberate plan in the weakest or most vindictive of princes. But Phocas, whom we will not salute with Pope Gregory's "*Gloria in Excelsis*," stands as the mere accident and transitory emergence of the subjectivity which had ruined the classical traditions and the empire. And it may be well to close this section here; for the official class, cowed but still haughty, only issues forth

under Heraclius into the light of day, assumes for a time large powers, takes on it the airs of a regency, and is once more rightly or wrongly deposed and forced into that secondary position which it will occupy during the remainder of the seventh century.

Official tradition extinguished under Phocas.

CHAPTER IV

REVIVAL OF IMPERIALISM AND OF MILITARY PRESTIGE UNDER THE HERACLIANS: RESENTMENT AND FINAL TRIUMPH OF CIVILIAN OLIGARCHY (620–700)

Position of Heraclius insecure.

§ 1. THE spectacle of the *demes* fraternising with a few disorderly mutineers to overthrow Maurice must have bitterly disheartened any true friend of the commonwealth who was capable of forming an impartial estimate. It may be questioned if in truth such a critic existed. Men of all classes seemed to rejoice at the fall of a conscientious prince, and to have believed that nothing was needed to restore the State but a change of ruler. It is very well for historians of our own time to see in this revolution the outcome of a grave popular hostility, directed against the existing order, the ruling and official aristocracy, the governing party in the Church. But it seems clear that public opinion was then incapable of rising to any universal and collective idea. Definite opposition was never formulated in terms intelligible to modern ears. There were no solemn deputations urging the emperor to change his ministers, to lighten taxation, or to redress abuse. The strange sight is afforded to us of a sovereign, friend and champion of Reform, struggling in vain with a people who resisted and hated it. The stern lesson, which brought these recalcitrant and refractory classes once more under discipline, was learnt in the scandalous disgrace of the new reign, the decimation of the nobles under pretext of conspiracy, and the menace of the Avar and Persian invasion. Great public events turned then, as they

rarely do in history, upon personal character and incident. Had not Phocas murdered Maurice, the benefactor of the Shah, war would not again have broken out between these ancient and indecisive belligerents. Had Phocas again resembled, in ever so slight a degree, the usual military pretender, he would have adorned with strenuous virtues a throne won by crime, and reinforced a nerveless or moribund civilian rule. Few popular cries have echoed with such wide emphasis as the words which reminded Phocas he still possessed a rival: *μάθε τὴν κατάστασιν, ὁ Μαυρίκιος οὐκ ἀπέθανεν.* For had he or his son Theodosius escaped to the asylum of the Persian Court, and in the end regained the purple, is it impossible to conceive a firm alliance against Saracen zealots, and an impregnable bulwark for the south-east of Europe? It was an era, like the tenth century in Rome, of individuals, not of ideas, and the objective trails heavily behind subjective caprice. The annals of the Heraclian house are scanty and obscure; yet we need no psychology to fill up in imagination the early years of the African deliverer. Did not the official class resume, in the new security, the old habits of dictation? Was not the encroachment on central authority, intermitted in the terror of Phocas' suspicious rule, resumed and extended? There must have been a "political contest" of the highest importance between monarchy and civil "feudalism," which is a worse form than the blunt but straightforward rule of the strong arm. Heraclius, in his design to shift the seat of government, desired to remove himself and the "Roman" traditions (little more was left) from the unpatriotic and costly misrule of the Bureaux, from the peril of the local militia. Disintegration had already so far set in, that it did not at first seem to matter whether the fragments of empire were conveyed or entombed! Africa had set the example of insurrection; and although his arrival

Position of Heraclius insecure.

Position of Heraclius insecure.

was a welcome relief, it was not forgotten that a "foreign" conqueror had occupied the throne, and brought with him a band of foreign supporters.

Officials, army, provinces: their disaffection.

Various types and hints of the mutinous spirit presented themselves; the Eastern heretical sects, Egypt, Naples and John Compsa, the Exarchate and Eleutherius, Rome and the pontiff, even the "prerogative tribe" itself, the Carthaginian province. The armies of Rome were reduced to a dangerous private legion in Cappadocia, and the African levies which were loyal to Heraclius. Cappadocia, indeed, could boast of being the native land of both Maurice and his murderer; and the tie which bound these provincial regiments to Priscus was (as we saw in the text) feudal and personal. Indeed, we may find in them some parallel to that Isaurian brigade which under Leo I. and Zeno (467–491) might form a useful counterpoise to Teutonic predominance, but roused a dangerous civil war under Anastasius. The ideal ruler of Priscus, their commander, was also the ideal of the now reviving civilian circles; a gentle and inaccessible sovereign, confined in his palace like the king of the Mossyni, bearing the whole weight of an autocracy which he did not exercise, the whole brunt of the odium he had not deserved. Quite like a mediæval baron, Priscus bluntly expresses his surprise at the emperor's visit to his fastness; "he had no business to quit his capital and visit the outlying detachments of troops." So in modern China, we can picture the resentment of a viceroy, hitherto a petty sovereign in his sphere, if a regular system of imperial visit and progress were to be established. The "Mandarinat" (if I may continue the suggestive parallel) of Byzantium equally resented the personal command of the sovereign in a distant war. With ready foresight they presaged the extinction of their influence, the suppression of their posts. If the new emperor threw in his lot with the military element and pur-

sued with success a vigorous policy, their reign was over. Heraclius, who in these strange years of dormant energy had never relinquished his design of restoration, recovered control over the feudal retinue of Priscus by guile and an adventurous appeal, over the civilian bureaux who surrounded and stifled him, by forming a new alliance,—with the wealth and growing influence of the Church.

Officials, army, provinces: their disaffection.

§ 2. The Senate still treats with the foreign foe as in ancient times. It had proscribed Vitalian under Anastasius, and it negotiated with the Persian general. The text is to be found in the *Paschal Chronicle;* and it is clear that in A.D. 618 the Byzantine government was a Venetian oligarchy, with a Doge first among his peers; or perhaps a Spartan aristocracy in a peaceful interlude when the military power of the kings was in abeyance. It is sent from "rulers" (*τῶν ἀρχόντων ἡμῶν*), and it seeks to lay blame on Phocas and exonerate Heraclius. It preserves a semblance of Roman pride with a significant alloy of religious pietism; it is not the Persian valour which has robbed the realm of its finest provinces, but the righteous indignation of Heaven. Already appear traces of this triple alliance of Emperor, Church, and Army, which revives the fainting spirit of the State, gives a loftier sanction to patriotism, wins back the lost, and strikes the foe in his hiding-place: makes a soldier's death the prize of martyrdom (*στέφος λάβωμεν μαρτύρων*), and tones the military bluntness with metaphysical ideals (Constantine IV. and the appeal for a trinity of emperors). Reinforced by this potent support, Heraclius is able in two decisive measures to abolish the "political" bread (which pauperised a seditious capital), to acquire funds from the one wealthy corporation that remained, and to proclaim a Holy War.

Senate resumes influence: prerogative reasserted during wars.

We must not forget that the position which Heraclius was summoned to occupy bore a painful resemblance to the majestic impotence of a mediæval

Senate resumes influence: prerogative reasserted during wars.

king. There was no army beyond his own retinue, and a suspected provincial force under a leader to whom he was too much indebted; there were no funds in the treasury; and there was no public spirit or opinion. His great stroke of diplomacy created these three indispensable factors of recovery in a national crisis. The interested and privileged were terrified by his proposal to sail for Carthage, and being sobered by the threat lent help; the patriarch, whose influence depended on imperial choice, not on hallowed associations, became the financier and banker of the great scheme. After some expostulation, Heraclius was permitted to head the army in person and revert to the strictly "imperatorial" tradition, in abeyance for more than two centuries. He leaves the regency to the now dutiful Senate, with the Patriarch Serge and the Patrician Bonus. When we ask for the actual achievement of Heraclius, we are at first in a dilemma: he seems to lose more than he wins back. But he recovers Asia Minor, and Roman tradition banished from Illyricum and Pannonia, once fruitful in princes, is to find a home there. Εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἦν Ἡρακλεῖος οὐκ ἂν ἦν Λέων. The solid, continuous, and opulent territory was formally reunited to the centre; and we have noticed that Leo's Byzantine monarchy is strictly territorial, and dismisses distant rights and prerogative, of which the meaning is already forgotten or obscured in the rising gloom.

Dependence of Heracliads on Senate.

§ 3. The few years after the death of Heraclius I. are the brief Indian summer of senatorial prestige. This body assumes the arbitrament of affairs and settles the succession. Martina summons a conclave of Senate and Patriarch to approve the will of Heraclius, in its way as strange as the testament of Maurice. But the people, who are also publicly consulted in the Hippodrome, refuse to sanction a divided throne and a female regency. Before the clamour of the mob Martina has to yield, like

Dependence of Heracliads on Senate.

another Agrippina. The reign of Heraclius Constantine II. was suspiciously short, and rumour accused Martina of poison. At last, with Heraclius III. and David Tiberius III., she sat on the throne, only to be soon exiled with tongue slit, in company with her son with nose cut. This unique and legitimate penalty imposed by a Senate on an emperor and empress-dowager is veiled in darkness. We may perhaps suspect a strong religious influence behind the Senate in this matter. Fiery monks made the most of Heraclius' incestuous alliance with a niece; and pointed to the little Constantine (whom we call Constans II. or III.) as "seized" of the sole right to rule. No doubt his childish hand signed the warrants for this mutilation, and he professes his gratefulness and allegiance to the Senate in language which deserves to be cited: "My father Constantine reigned for a long time with Heraclius, my grandsire, but after him for a very brief space. For a stepmother's jealousy abruptly severed all this excellent promise, and dismissed him from life. And this crime she wrought for the sake of her own son, born in unholy wedlock with Heraclius. But her and her son your most righteous vote under Heaven has cast from the throne, so that we may not look upon the empire of the Romans as most villainous and contrary to all law; for to prevent this is the especial care of your worshipful and honourable assembly. Wherefore, I beseech you to lend me your aid as my councillors and judges of the common weal of the subjects." (*χρηστοτάτας ἐλπίδας ὁ μητρυίας φθόνος συνδιατμήξας τοῦ ζῆν ἀπήλλαξεν . . . ἣν μάλιστα μετὰ τοῦ τέκνου ἡ ὑμετέρα σὺν θεῷ ψῆφος τῆς βασιλείας δικαίως ἐξέβαλεν, πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἰδεῖν ἐκνομώτατον τὴν βασιλείαν Ῥωμαίων. Τοῦτο μάλα ἐγνωκυῖα ἡ ὑμετέρα ὑπερφυὴς σεμνοπρέπεια. Διὸ παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς ἔχειν συμβούλους κ. γνώμονας τῆς κοινῆς τῶν ὑπηκόων σωτηρίας*, Theophanes ad ann. 642.) In translating the somewhat obscure words of the young prince, I am

Dependence of Heracliads on Senate.

inclined to attach more weight than Dr. Bury to the terms ἐκνομώτατον . . . and μαλὰ ἐγνωκυῖα. It is recognised (and the old Latin version agrees) that the maintenance of law and precedent is the true province and function of the Senate. It was their duty to keep the succession pure, and not allow a monstrous hybrid to usurp the throne. "This is the special decision or resolve of your noble House."

Autocracy revived by Constans (650): armies and priests.

§ 4. We can only judge of the policy and success of this remarkable prince by indirect evidence. We are forced to suppose that before he left the capital to consolidate his western dominions, he had reduced the senatorial predominance and reorganised Asia,—in a word, established a military and "thematic" administration under personal control. The Senate as an independent body disappears. The ministers who with individual or corporate influence controlled his childhood vanish and leave no successors. It has been noticed that the middle years of the seventh and eighth century alike are under a strong Constantine, and that both suffer unduly at the hands of clerical historians. When the "Occidentation" of our Constans (if I may use the term) sends him on a last pilgrimage of a Roman emperor to his aged and crumbling capital, he is acting in exact reverse to his greater namesake of the "Isaurian" line, who seems careless of the West and the elder Rome. But Constans is the pioneer, born before his time, of the Erastian or Iconoclastic movement. His attitude to the dogmatic questions which agitated that singular society, and gave it a semblance of intellectual interest, was strangely candid and free from bigotry. His aim was political rather than religious in attempting to unify and concentrate Church teaching. In the attainable truth of speculation he was indifferent, if not, like Constantine V., openly derisive. The struggle is now not with a privileged class of officials, rather with a body of refined ecclesiastical opinion; which having once entered

into alliance with the sovereign in the Persian wars, sought to retain him in permanent tutelage. Neither the African nor the "Syrian" house was sympathetic towards this belated Hellenism. Finlay may be correct or merely fanciful in suggesting that the "Roman" Empire ended in the fall of the Heracliads, and that Leo III. opens the Byzantine epoch properly so called. But the spirit of the Iconoclasts is above all things Roman in the true sense; and their natural yet practical and worldly piety swept away the cobwebs of dialectic, and tore the ascetic from his dreamy lair. This hostile attitude towards orthodoxy marks both Constantines, whose aims seem so unlike, yet were so much akin. The ecclesiastical influence succeeds civilian or ministerial control; and issues in strange forms when it reaches the lowest and most ignorant order in the State. We may believe the mutiny of the "Anatolics" to represent the new and self-conscious importance of the provincial armies, or a rising engineered by a crafty priesthood, to thwart by parcelling out the central authority. It may look backward to the German armies of Vitellius marching southward to occupy the capital, or forward into the superstition of the Middle Ages. But in any event the incident is curious, and I venture to note it with some care as an evidence of both these tendencies,—as a proof of the new alliance of the soldier and the monk, against a power which demanded the subordination of Army and Church alike to the impersonal State: for Constantine IV. is fighting against the clerical feudalism of the West. The story is told by Theophanes (who copies the lost part of John Malala?), with the naïve and impressive coolness of the typical chronicler: *οἱ δὲ τοῦ θέματος τῶν Ἀνατολικῶν* [first reference in Theophanes] *ἦλθον ἐν Χρυσοπόλει λέγοντες ὅτι εἰς τὴν Τριάδα πιστεύομεν· τοὺς τρεῖς στέψωμεν. Ἐταράχθη ὁ Κωνσταντῖνος ὅτι μόνος ἦν ἐστεμμένος οἱ δὲ ἀδελφοὶ οὐδεμίαν ἀξίαν εἶχον, κ. ἀποστείλας Θεόδωρον πατρίκιον*

Autocracy revived by Constans (650): armies and priests.

The military revolt (670): armies and priests.

τὸν Κολωνείας ἐτροπώσατο αὐτούς, ἐπαινέσας αὐτούς. Καὶ ἔλαβεν τὰ πρωτεῖα αὐτῶν τοῦ ἀνελθεῖν ἐν τῇ πόλει κ. μετὰ τῆς Συγκλήτου βουλεύσασθαι κ. ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημα αὐτῶν. Εὐθέως δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς αὐτοὺς ἐφούρκισεν ἀντίπεραν ἐν Συκαῖς, κ. τοῦτο ἰδόντες κ. καταισχυνθέντες εἰσῆλθον ἐν ὀδύνῃ εἰς τὰ ἴδια. ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐῤῥινοκόπησεν. The narrative of Zonaras is but a classical re-writing of this simple story. We may notice one or two points of interest: (1) The religious motive of the sedition; (2) the guileful policy of the emperor, who can only get his way by craft, like Heraclius I. in the matter of Butelinus or Priscus, or like Severus Alexander himself, who can only punish military leaders by a delusive honour; (3) the consultation of the Senate, which, whether to decide of itself or merely ratify a sovereign's decision, is always to the fore in the matter of disputed succession. We may note that the two brothers were actually associated with Constantine IV., appear together on coins, and receive jointly the letter of Pope Agatho. It is therefore not unfair to style them Heraclius IV. and Tiberius IV.; and thus six rulers of this once detested name held the honours at least of empire in Byzantium, while usurpers assumed it like the titles Antoninus or Flavius to secure allegiance.

Imperial prestige under C. IV. (680).

§ 5. The attentive enmity which looked askance at the Heraclian family was distracted by the Mahometan siege of the capital, the success of Constantine IV., the tributary vassalage of the Caliphate, and the marvellous recovery throughout East and West alike of imperial prestige. Distant Indian tribes had sent gifts and felicitations to Heraclius after his Persian triumph; and now, although Spain was lost, envoys come with tribute and homage from Lombard and Italian. Even in that dull age there is clearly some dim recognition of the new and beneficent rôle of the empire. The city of Constantine was nearer an acknowledged hegemony over Western

Europe than she will ever be again. Not yet have the exploits of Charles Martel and the alliance of papal Rome and the Franks turned attention to the newer champion of Christendom. The loss of Spanish seaports did little harm to the imperial tradition; and the historians of Gaul and Spain still turn loyal and admiring glances Eastwards. Isidorus, writing of the Gothic monarchy which supplanted the empire, speaks as if the sovereignty still belongs to the latter; the kingship is a subordinate lieutenancy; "*fruiturque hactenus inter regis infulas et opes largas Imperii felicitate secura.*" When for the second time under the Heraclian dynasty the Caliphate pays rather than receives tribute, and John the Patrician, called Pitzigaudes, has successfully arranged a lasting peace (ἀρχαιογενὴς, says Theophanes, τῆς πολιτείας κ. πολύπειρος . . . πλατεῖαν εἰρήνην φυλάττεσθαι), the allegiance of the Occident revives: Ταῦτα μαθόντες οἱ τὰ Ἑσπέρια οἰκοῦντες μέρη, ὅ τε Χάγανος τῶν Ἀβάρων κ. οἱ ἐπέκεινα ῥῆγες ἔξαρχοι τε κ. γαστάλδοι κ. οἱ ἐξοχώτατοι τῶν πρὸς τὴν δύσιν ἐθνῶν, διὰ πρεσβευτῶν δῶρα τῷ βασιλεῖ στείλαντες εἰρηνικὴν πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἀγαπὴν κυρωθῆναι ἠτήσαντο; εἴξας οὖν ὁ Β. ταῖς αὐτῶν αἰτήσεσιν ἐκύρωσε καὶ πρὸς αὐτοὺς δεσποτικὴν εἰρήνην. Καὶ ἐγένετο ἀμεριμνία μεγαλὴ ἐν τε τῇ Ἀνατολῇ κ. ἐν τῇ Δύσει. In the version of Anastasius the last phrases run: "*Annuens itaque postulationibus eorum confirmavit etiam circa illos donatoriam pacem, et facta est securitas magna in Oriente nec non in Occidente.*"—Yet the duel was only suspended, not settled: the reign of Justinian II. recalls the earlier Cæsars in their suspicion and arbitrary treatment of the higher, that is, the official class. For the first time we read of bad ministers, like Tigellinus or Cleander, of illegal penalties, imprisonments, confiscations,—among which, perhaps, the most notable was the whipping of Anastasia, the empress-mother, by Stephen the Persian, chief eunuch or Kisla Agha of the palace (τοῦ δὲ βασιλέως ἀποδημησάντος κατετόλμησεν ὁ ἄγριος θὴρ ἐκεῖνος . . . τὴν Αὐγοῦσταν παι-

Imperial prestige under C. IV. (680).

J. II. hostile to official class (690).

J. II. hostile to official class (690).

δικῶς δι' ἀβίνων μαστιγῶσαι, *loris vel habenis verberare*). This minister is represented as a truly Egyptian taskmaster for the public works on which the emperor, true to the tradition of his name, had set his mind (τοὺς μὲν ὅπερας αἰκίζειν οὐκ ἠρκεῖτο ἀλλὰ κ. λιθοβολεῖν αὐτούς τε κ. τοὺς ἐπίστατας). He incurred the detestation of the "civil" class and made the emperor detested (εἰς ἅπαν τὸ πολιτικὸν πλῆθος πολλὰ κακὰ ἐνδειξάμενος μισητὸν τὸν Βασιλέα πεποίηκεν . . . so below of Theodotus, ἐπηύξησε τὸ μῖσος τοῦ λαοῦ πρὸς τὸν B.). Theodotus, once a cloistered abbot of Thrace on Propontis (ἀββᾶς . . . ἔγκλειστος . . . ἐν τοῖς Θρᾳκῴοις τοῦ στενοῦ μέρεσι), persecutes the wealthy and official class; extracts money by suspending over burning straw (πλείστους τῆς πολιτείας ἄρχοντας κ. ἐμφανεῖς ἄνδρας . . . ἀχύροις ὑποκαπνίζων). Two points are to be noticed in this new and unhappy phase of the imperial "war against private wealth" and independent social influence—the two culprits, Stephen the chief eunuch and Theodotus the ex-abbot, were Ministers of Finance; the one Σακελλάριος corresponded to the older title, *comes rerum privatarum*; and the other was appointed to the general care of the revenues, εἰς τὰ τοῦ γενικοῦ λογοθεσίου πράγματα, answering to the duties of the *comes sacrarum largitionum*.

Imperial control of finance.

Now it would appear that among the silent changes in official name or function during Heraclius' reign, the terms *Sacellarius* and *Logothetes* supplanted the earlier forms which had been in use since the days of Constantine. And "Sacellarius" is at first an *ecclesiastical* office; so it is used, *e.g.*, of Thomas, "deacon and bursar," consecrated Patriarch on the death of Cyriac in the reign of Phocas. Under Heraclius, some twenty-five years later, it is used without further comment of a certain Theodorus who is despatched with Baanes, "with great force," against the Arabs at Edessa, and chases them to Damascus. If we turn to Nicephorus we find this

more explicit statement: στρατηγὸν Ἀνατολῆς ἐκπέμπει Θεόδωρον τῶν βασιλικῶν χρημάτων ταμίαν τὸν ἐπικλὴν Τριθύριον. Suidas (*s.v.* Justinian) gives him the same title, and it seems clear that in the growing preoccupation with matters religious and ecclesiastical, the "Sacred Home" of the emperor borrowed a clerical designation for his steward. The *ordinary* revenue and general care of finance fell to the new office of "*Logothete*," accountant rather than comptroller (for the Heraclians were their own ministers of the Exchequer and lords of the Treasury). Both Suidas and Nicephorus call him τῶν δημοσίων λογιστὴν ὃν τὸ δημῶδες λογοθετὴν γενικὸν ἐποίησεν = appellavit. Zonaras (who is clearly engaged in finding an elegant paraphrase for the rude, common narrative which lies behind all these writers) has of Stephen, σακελλάριος προεβλήθη, and of "Theodosius" (as he styles the monk) γενικὸν ὁ Β. προεβάλετο.—The other point is the illegal exactions (εἰκῇ κ. ἀπροφασίστως ἀπαιτήσεις κ. ἐκταγὰς κ. δημεύσεις ποιούμενος) in which Theodotus revelled: it is expressly remarked that his victims were the inhabitants of the capital not the revenue-agents (οὐκ ἐκ τῶν διοικητῶν μόνον ἀλλὰ κ. ἐκ τῶν τῆς πόλεως οἰκητόρων). Here Nicephorus renders the latter by τοὺς ὑπ' αὐτὸν, either his own bailiff who could not make up the proper amount or, widely, those under his direct jurisdiction. Clearly his authority was arbitrarily extended to those normally outside its scope.

Imperial control of finance.

§ 6. I have dwelt at length on this remarkable illustration of the new methods of government, and have perhaps unduly encroached on a section set apart for considering the ministers or Bureaux of the later empire. But the whole passage (in the general obscurity) sheds a flood of light upon the unhappy relations of prince and people, which fiscal exaction and ministerial irresponsibility were creating. We must complete the picture by disclosing the discreditable duties of the urban prefect: ὁ ἔπαρχος

Ministerial irresponsibility: revolt of magnates: overthrow of central power.

Ministerial irresponsibility: revolt of magnates: overthrow of central power.

τῇ βασιλικῇ κελεύσει πλειστοὺς ἄνδρας ἐν εἱρκταῖς κατακλείσας ἐπὶ χρόνους (= for many years) τηρεῖσθαι πεποίηκε. When Leontius, General of Greece, opened the Prætorium, released the prisoners, and so overpowered Justinian (A.D. 695), this typical "Bastille" was found full of notable men and soldiers (τοὺς καθειργμένους ἄνδρας πολλοὺς κ. γενναίους ἀπὸ ἓξ κ. ὀκτὼ χρόνων ἐγκεκλεισμένους, στρατιώτας τοὺς πλείονας τυγχάνοντας). It seems evident that Zonaras is led astray when he says, τὰς δημοσίας διαῤῥῆξας εἱρκτάς. The revolution with its curious watchwords, "All Christians to Saint Sophia," "This is the day which the Lord hath made," was by no means unpopular; but in origin and plan it was strictly aristocratic. It did not aim, as in old days, at the abolition of debt, the arming of slaves, the liberation of common criminals. Indeed, the Prætorium was not the receptacle for ordinary misdemeanants; nor was lengthy incarceration a favourite penalty either with ruler or subject. These prisoners confined for six or eight years (Leontius himself had been detained for three) comprised suspected aristocrats only.—The nominal cause of the rebellion is significant either of the wildness of popular rumour or the real madness which had seized the last Heracliad, as it seized Caius or Caracalla. He had ordered a general massacre of the city population, beginning from the Patriarch!—that Patriarch Callinicus who had, after a protest, meekly acquiesced in the demolition of a church with the words, Glory to God, who is always longsuffering! (ἀνεχομένῳ πάντοτε). Two monks, friends of Leontius, are prime movers, and Callinicus comes into the baptistery, where the people had assembled, to give a religious sanction and a Scripture text to the insurrection. Thus the event of 695, with all its dismal consequence, was a noble and a clerical movement (though behind it lay the military influence of a late general of the Anatolics); it betrays the unpopularity of the

stern and wilful emperor. The mob of the capital and the official class were about to throw off the yoke. Like Jeshurun, they had prospered and grown comfortable. Twenty-two years of disorder must elapse before they again acknowledge a ruler; and this episode is important enough to merit special treatment. We may here dismiss the general political tendencies under the later Heracliads. Justinian II. is loudly accused of upsetting his father's foreign and domestic policy (Niceph., *τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῆς εἰρηνης ἕνεκα, κ. τῆς ἄλλης πολιτικῆς εὐταξίας βραβευθέντα διέστρεφε*. Zonaras, *αὐτοβούλως τῇ διοικήσει κεχρημένος πολλοῖς τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν κακοῖς περιέβαλεν*, xiv. 22). We will not here discuss the wisdom of his haughty behaviour to the Caliphate. He certainly estranges the support of the Church and the nobility (now largely warlike in temper), and thus a union of the two influences, joined by the fickle mob, was fatal in a moment to a dynasty which had ruled with glory for eighty-five years. This "round" in the long encounter ended disastrously for the central power; and the work of rebuilding is all to be done anew by the next house.

Ministerial irresponsibility: revolt of magnates: overthrow of central power.

§ 7. I cannot leave the Heracliads without noticing the curious and fanciful speculations of Finlay upon the "Extinction of the Roman power." To him, the Roman Empire really ends with Justinian II., and the rest of our period is buried in pure Byzantinism. Heraclius must have "regarded himself as of pure Roman blood"; and this century witnesses the gradual decay of the "few remains of Roman principles of administration." The aristocracy lose the memory of former days and a nobler tradition. A long and violent struggle is carried on between emperor and nobles, "representing the last degenerate remains of the Senate"; so "counsels are distracted and energy paralysed." It began under Maurice, and underlay the whole history of the

Triumph (700) of the civilian and official oligarchy.

Triumph (700) of the civilian and official oligarchy.

Heraclian house. This opposition was more Oriental than Roman in character; and it was "imbued with the semi-Hellenic culture, which had grown up during the Macedonian supremacy." Both Heraclius and Constans III., in their scheme of removing the capital to Carthage, Rome, or Syracuse, had endeavoured to curtail its dangerous and anti-Roman power. They entertained the vain hope of reforming the republic "on a purely Roman basis," so as "to counteract the power of the Greek nationality, which was gaining ground in Church and State." The contest ended in the "destruction of all influence that was purely Roman." The result was to establish a "mere arbitrary despotism," differing little from the familiar Eastern type, and to upset all those "fundamental institutions" and that systematic character, which had so often enabled the State to rise superior to the accident of a Nero or a Phocas. —Such in brief outline is the view propounded in a retrospect of the seventh century. And the historian seeking illumination in the darkness can only be grateful for the boldness of such a venturesome pioneer. But the estimate is coloured, and perhaps corrupted by an exaggerated meaning attached to the terms Macedonian, Roman, Greek. He is tempted to give to the Hellenes of the days of Justinian and Heraclius the same acute self-consciousness and national solidarity, as he was fain to discover in their descendants during the war of Liberation and under the Bavarian Protectorate. He is continually whetting our curiosity by hints of the unanimous and precise public opinion which arrayed itself consciously against Roman rule. This thesis cannot be maintained; I need not here repeat the arguments. It is impossible to see the same irreconcilable and united front shown to Byzantine monarch as to later Turkish Sultan. I am well aware of the existence of disaffected and indeed disintegrating elements; but they were not solid or self-

conscious, and they were certainly not exclusively Hellenic. Nor was the Senate of Byzantine patricians really imbued with a tradition of aloofness and opposition borrowed from the older Roman Curia; nor with a Macedonian culture;—nor finally with a pure Hellenic orthodoxy in the matter of religious belief.—The empire had created a ruling and official class, far more open and democratic than exists to-day in Western Europe, except perhaps in France; but rapidly acquiring the features of a powerful caste, almost of a hereditary *noblesse*. A period of security following successful wars will increase the conceit and pretensions of such a close corporation. And into it was drawn or drained all riches and ability and all religious influence; for the patriarch and the monk are integral factors in the situation. Justinian II. had tried unwisely to humble this official pride; but the emperor and his immediate and personal executive stood isolated, and he had lost the early popular affections which had so often supported persecuting sovereigns against the Senate. The aristocracy, neither Greek nor Macedonian nor Roman, but just a natural product of an orderly State, triumphs on this signal occasion; and the monarchy suffers eclipse for quite a quarter of a century. One point only need we add; the new nobility is largely militant, the profession of arms revives once more, and the Byzantine aristocrat does not lurk in a Bureau, but serves in the Thematic regiments. Elsewhere we must trace the vitality of the military element; here we will say in bidding farewell to an obscure but memorable epoch, that the Heraclians fell before the machinations of an aristocracy which had drawn to itself the strength of civil and warlike virtue, and was reinforced by the religious sympathy and active support of the clerical world.

Triumph (700) of the civilian and official oligarchy.

CHAPTER V

PERIOD OF ANARCHY AND REVIVAL OF CENTRAL POWER UNDER ARMENIAN AND MILITARY INFLUENCE

A. THE REJECTED CANDIDATES (695–717)

Benefits conferred by the Isaurians: perils of Elective Monarchy.

§ 1. THE half-century covered by the reigns of Leo III. and his son Constantine V. was without doubt the most critical period in Byzantine, perhaps in European, history. These two princes, standing out clearly from a grey background as rulers and personalities, deferred for seven centuries the triumph of Islam in Constantinople. They restored solidity to an incoherent realm formed of detached patches without continuous tradition or territory. They gave back dignity to the central authority. Since the death of Justinian I., this had been helpless or quiescent; or else had struggled against the forces of separatism, armed with great social influence; or (as the sole condition of a temporary power) appealed to a scanty remnant of "national" spirit, and proclaimed a Holy War to save the commonwealth and its creed. Throughout Byzantine history the home-government takes its colour and temper from foreign circumstances. Left in peace without, the administration moves along of itself on the archaic grooves. Like any other civilised society whose aim it is to preserve the past, not to destroy the present, it was exposed to the various frailties and abuses which beset peaceful States. Wealth centred in the hands of a few; privilege could defy the uniform and equitable action of law; office became a prize; and the members of the hierarchy protected each other and set a gulf between the rulers and the ruled.

Benefits conferred by the Isaurians: perils of Elective Monarchy.

The sinews of the State were relaxed; barbarians fought its battles and the commonalty became pauperised or enslaved. From time to time, the empire was awakened from this corrupt and drowsy torpor by real peril. It became once more a camp of honest and hard-working soldiers under a chosen and approved leader. The minor figures, the irresponsible courtier, the obstinate permanent official, retire into obscurity; and we once more read of the designs, the exploits, the failures of the hero. Such a crisis had arisen in the reign of Phocas; such a revival had occurred under Heraclius and his house. The State had no time to sink into a slovenly peace, when the misrule of Justinian II. and the "twenty years' anarchy" blotted out the beneficial recovery of the Heraclian age and gave some able soldier the whole task to do over again. On the extinction of a recognised line, power went back again to its original source; the people resumed the forfeited right and reissued it. The years of turmoil between the first dethronement of Justinian and the accession of Leo were by no means ill-spent. If a State determines that its titular head shall be also its generalissimo and chief administrator, if it starts with the curious democratic presumption that any man of any rank ought to be able to rise to this height, the discovery of this best man must needs be a violent and a costly process. The leadership of a herd is settled by a combat, brute force, or craft. The presidency of a republic falls either to a general who "pronounces" against a corrupt government of chicanery, or to an obscure and harmless nominee who is agreed upon by compromise. Or again, as in the United States, the prize is won by a genuine effort of popular interest, and business is suspended every five years that the State may choose its premier. The theory of elective monarchy is, like many theories, unassailable by logic: if men are equal and merit alone should be rewarded, tried com-

Benefits conferred by the Isaurians: perils of Elective Monarchy.

petence alone hold sway, the first place, whether of dignity or responsibility, should be thrown open to all. No sacrifice of domestic peace should be grudged if the best man can be secured. In practice, it is the most abnormal and conspicuously unsuccessful form of government: it is unintelligible to the vast majority of mankind, who are patrimonialists, never understanding a divided and impersonal control. It rouses the fires of envy and jealousy against triumphant merit (which in the happiest and most virtuous community is always unpopular). Yet at times this struggle to secure the best man has been an indispensable expedient, especially where the State is no longer a safe and continuous realm of peace and order, but an oasis in the desert, an island threatened on all sides by the sea and often nearly submerged. Uncertainty as to the fundamental character of the chief office ran through the imperial history of Rome. Was Augustus a military leader, or the president of a free State? or was he some untrained youth to whom rank and power came as a birthright? No final answer was at any time forthcoming. No definite status was ever formally allotted to him; and on his shoulders the whole weight rested, the credit or discredit, the success or failure. We can trace without difficulty how the balance swung at different times in favour of the *dictatorship*, the civil *presidency*, the *patrimony*. But the three were never expressly discriminated; and this doubtful character marks the entire record.

The revolutions of 695, 698.

§ 2. A prince born in the purple, like his forefathers for three generations, had been tried and found wanting. Justinian II. enjoys with Michael V. the rare distinction of dethronement by the popular voice. It is often difficult in other transfers of the throne to detect the real feeling of the people, or the inclination of the still powerful populace of the capital. But as to the downfall of Justinian there could be no mistake. Leontius (who

believed the emperor's commission as governor of Hellas was a death-warrant) presented himself just at the right moment, and was at once a popular favourite. With consummate ease the bloodless revolution of 695 was effected. Neither the State prison nor the tyrant's palace was properly guarded. The illustrious captives were set free by a transparent ruse; the palace entered by a few hundred determined men. No resistance was offered and Leontius was lenient to the prostrate emperor. Once more a general of tried experience had ousted an effete stock; the rules had been strictly observed in one of the approved methods of changing sovereigns. The sole event of Leontius' brief reign was the African war, in which Carthage was captured, recovered, and lost again. Leontius might well have used the humorous words of an old commander in the third century: "You have lost a good general and gained a very indifferent emperor." He had fought bravely in the early years of Justinian II.; but he could not leave his uncertain throne; and John, a eunuch and patrician, after a first success, was forced to retreat in disgrace. In Crete the troops mutiny, laying their disgrace to their general or the emperor. Absimarus, "governor of Cilicia" (Abulpharagius), *drungaire* of the Cibyræot Theme (at that time exercising his marine supervision at Corycus), is saluted emperor, and a Gotho-Greek is seated on the throne of the Cæsars. John is massacred; the *foreign* guards at Blachern Wall are bribed; the city is taken; Leontius deposed and sent noseless to a monastery, and his partisans are whipped and exiled. The new emperor began a reign of great promise. He placed his brother Heraclius in command of all the Asiatic troops, now almost entirely cavalry; he is μονοστρατηγὸς πάντων τῶν καβαλαρικῶν θεμάτων (Theoph.), or στρατηγὸς τοῦ Ἀνατολικοῦ στρατοῦ (Niceph.). He relies only on his own family, and he is justified in his choice. In a war of revenge, Heraclius penetrates into Com-

The revolutions of 695, 698.

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The revolutions of 695, 698.

magene and slays 200,000 Moslems: later in 703 he twice defeats Azar in Cilicia, in the second engagement accounting for 12,000 men. But in the failure of a direct successor or a recognised line, the throne was within the grasp of any one, however obscure, who had the hardihood to seize it. An *Armenian* Bardanes (or Vardan), son of a patrician Nicephorus, but otherwise without repute, believed the promise of soothsayers and attempted a rising. He was shorn and banished to Cephallenia. Justinian II. now returns by the aid of Terbelis "Cæsar," king of the Bulgarians; just as later we shall see this very Bardanes supported by the Khazars, and Leo III. himself saluted emperor by the infidel troops of Maslema before the walls of Amorium.

Vengeance of Justinian restored (710).

§ 3. With this unhappy return of a madman the recuperative process is arrested throughout the empire. Heraclius, the gallant defender of the eastern frontier (if such can still be said to exist) is seized in Thrace and hung; his death leaves Asia Minor open to assault, and Justinian is too busy with his personal vengeance to attend to the defence of his realm. It is difficult to know who supported the mad emperor during his restoration (705–711), after he had quarrelled with his new and disgraceful allies. Six years are filled with cruelty at home and defeat abroad. His only enemies were his own subjects. The capture of Tyana by the Saracens placed all Asia Minor at their mercy. One band of armed raiders insolently advanced to Chrysopolis and returned scathless loaded with booty. Justinian was defeated in person (708) by Terbelis, shocked at the treatment which his insane son-in-law meted to his own subjects. The two incredible punitive expeditions against Ravenna and Cherson completed the picture of the reign and filled up the cup of Justinian. Against this latter city, to which the Roman Empire honourably preserved autonomy till the middle of the next century, he is said to have despatched

a monstrous armada of 100,000 men. Elias a *spathaire* commands them, and carries with him Bardanes from Cephallenia to a safer and more distant exile. Summary vengeance is executed on the chief inhabitants for their treatment of the dethroned Justinian; but its comparative mildness exasperated the emperor, who threatened the returning squadron with the same awful penalties they had been too timid to inflict. He had now no supporters left; and his end was a mere matter of time. His doom was perhaps delayed by the terrible storm which burst over the returning convoys and buried 63,000 (if we can credit the enormous total) under the waters of the Euxine. At this catastrophe, which must have denuded the empire of half its troops, Justinian exulted, as if over a notable defeat of his enemies. The garrison and citizens of Cherson, realising their common danger, now revolt: Elias refuses the purple, Vardan the *Armenian* exile accepts, and takes the name Philippicus. The Khazars help them to arrest and imprison a feeble force sent by the furious prince; and the expedition sets sail for the capital, and overcomes a pretence at resistance. Elias, whose children Justinian had poniarded himself in their mother's arms, had the supreme satisfaction of cutting off his head and despatching the gory trophy to Italy. Tiberius, the little son of Justinian by his Bulgarian spouse, already associated in the empire, was cruelly put to death, and the most sanguinary interlude in the whole of Byzantine history was over.

Vengeance of Justinian restored (710).

Revolt of the Armenian Vardan.

It cannot be said that Vardan the *Armenian* justified his election as Philippicus. Of his brief reign no event is recorded, save the dismal series of raids by Terbelis on the North, by the Saracens on the East. A facile speaker, he never put his thoughts or words into practice. Like many another *parvenu*, he believed the chief dignity to be a place of pleasure and repose. Immersed in the

Revolt of the Armenian Vardan.

pleasures of the circus or the table, he spent the hoards of the Heraclian house in foolish waste. After seventeen months' reign he was displaced by the most singular plot in all Byzantine history.

Civilians profit by shortsight of military conspirators.

§ 4. It is the purpose of our inquiry, while passing lightly over the familiar historical events and record of fruitless or successful campaigns, to attempt to grasp the secret motive, the hidden incentive of the conspiracies or revolutionary movements which from time to time altered the person or the ideal of Cæsarism. Family jealousy, a courtier's intrigue, a general's contempt, a people's indignation,—these are some of the causes which transferred the throne. But the conspirators of the year 713 would seem animated by no spirit but righteous anger at incompetence. They determined to remove the head of the State: they made no provision, selfish or patriotic, for the appointment of a successor. The ringleaders in this short-sighted plot were George Buraphus the patrician, Count of the Obsician Theme, with Theodorus Myacius, also a patrician. With incredible boldness they seemed to have despatched a sergeant and a few soldiers to seize the emperor as best they could, and disqualify him for holding office. With a facility equally incredible, the band entered the palace unchallenged, found the emperor enjoying a drunken siesta, enveloped him in a mantle, hurried him off to the changing-room (ὀρνατούριον) of the Green faction in the Hippodrome, and deprived him of sight. Their mission over, the party dispersed: when the unfortunate man was found late in the afternoon bewailing his fate, neither the official class nor the public betrayed any sympathy, consternation, elation, or regret. No one thought of insulting the fallen prince or of defending his cause. He was quietly thrust into the background and disappears from history. No one appeared to seize the vacant throne; the city was utterly unprepared for the plot, the conspirators for

its success. There ensued a scene singular and perhaps unique in our history. People, churchman and magnate meet in solemn conclave at Saint Sophia's; and elect with unanimous voice the Secretary of State (πρωτοασηκρήτις) Artemius, changing his name to an old and meritorious wearer of the purple, Anastasius. The first act of a brief sovereignty, not altogether devoid of dignity or merit, was the punishment of George and Theodore, whose amazing folly (or pure unselfishness) had opened up the way to the throne: they lose their eyes, and retire into exile at Thessalonica. Like Tiberius III. (Apsimar), Anastasius had the makings of a capable sovereign. His election represented the triumph of the civilians; the military had struck home but could not follow up the blow, and the fruits of the victory fell to the rival department. It is useless to speculate on the cause of this miscarriage. But for two years the military leaders looked on and held their peace; and the ephemeral civilian was overthrown by the same mutiny in the ranks that had overthrown Leontius seventeen years before. Once more a fleet was despatched against the Saracens; this time to the east. Once more a commander named John became unpopular with his men,—no doubt because being both a deacon and the imperial treasurer (γεν. λογοθ.) he represented in their eyes an enemy of the military caste. The Obsician soldiers are the chief mutineers; and it may well be that they had not forgotten their leader's abortive attempt two years before. Returning to the capital in disorder and without a captain, they seize on Theodosius, a harmless tax-collector or revenue-officer, at Adramyttium, and half in sport and delighted with his obvious shyness and terror, compel him to assume the purple.

Civilians profit by shortsight of military conspirators.

Reprisals of army under Theodosius III.

§ 5. Theodosius had been reluctantly pushed into success which in his heart he bitterly regretted. The garrison at the palace of Blachern had again

Striking success of Leo III.: support of Islam.

proved venal and had let in the Obsician malcontents, who were bent on avenging the failure of 713. Anastasius II. retired to Nice and entrenched himself there; after a fight in which 7000 fell in civil war, he abdicates, takes orders, and retires to Thessalonica. Then ensued a brief reign of pious incompetence; the clergy at home and the Bulgarians were propitiated by lavish gifts, the latter even with some cession of Roman ground; the Saracens invade under the Caliph's brother, and advancing with impunity into the heart of Asia Minor, lay siege to Amorium. Two linesmen from Germanicia in Commagene, Leo (Conon), Artavasdus, general of the Armeniacs, make a compact to relieve the State. Just a century later there will be a similar accord between three rough warriors, another Leo, Michael, and Thomas. The critical state of the realm may be judged from the offer of surrender to Maslema, which came from the people of the interior provinces; uncertain (amid the change of policy and continual forays) of which kingdom they were subjects, they besought him to accept them as vassals (*παρακαλοῦντες αὐτὸν λαβεῖν αὐτούς*). It is true that there is another side to the picture; on the institution of the *kharidj*, known as capitation tax, among the Moslem, many are said to have fled into the Roman State still orderly and moderately rated. But at this time the Roman government was raising revenue from its subjects without protecting them; and the current of emigration set in the other way. The officials of the capital knew that nothing was to be hoped from the amiable usurper, everything to be feared from a resolute leader of troops. Leo got rid of the half-friendly, half-hostile overtures of the Caliph's brother, opened negotiations with the ministers, allowed Theodosius to retire thankfully into clerical life at Ephesus, and won almost without a blow, a murder, or a threat, the most important of all the civil wars of Rome.

It was clear to all that unless a strong hand and a dynastic system came to the rescue, the commonwealth would become the alternate prize of the wily courtier and the bluff soldier,—or rather in turn the sport of the civilian and the undisciplined troops. The strangest alliance in all Roman history decided the fate of the empire. A Roman *imperator* is saluted by the Moslem who were blockading him; and the cry was caught up by the citizens of Amorium, wafted to the capital, and echoed (though not without misgiving) in every heart. The reign of the great Armenian heretics had begun.

This development analogous to earlier revolutions: Roman tradition revived by plebeians and aliens.

§ 6. The circumstances are singularly like those which attended the elevation of the Flavian house in the first, of the African house of Severus at the close of the second, century. In Nero, Commodus, Justinian II., we have the ignorant, highly-strung, overwrought purple-born, whose promising career ends in horror and ruin. We have the ship of State, its born pilot proved incapable, rolling in the trough of the seas; timid hands stretch out to the helm; and one after another is discarded with more or less violence and damage. Then the man of the hour comes to the front and rights the vessel which is nearly foundering. It took less than two years to discover Vespasian, less than six months to bring in Severus. But the long-drawn agony of the empire stretched after the first dethronement of Justinian into more than twenty years. Yet the result in all three cases was the same; a soldier of simple life, austere and puritan tastes, and fixed purpose, comes to reform a moribund and useless government. Cæsarism went back once more to the rudiments; tired of its caricature it sought a genuine representative among the people. In a feudal country the chief place would be a prize contended for by patrician families; in the more democratic atmosphere of the empire, noble birth was perpetually on its trial, and when it ceased to play its part

This development analogous to earlier revolutions: Roman tradition revived by plebeians and aliens.

was ruthlessly ousted. The saviour of society was always an upstart and a *parvenu*, sought out in the lowest ranks and trained in the school of want and adversity. The reign and policy of Leo the Armenian are familiar to many who know little of the obscurer parts of Byzantine history—a military, a religious, and a legal reorganisation. The Roman memories and traditions were not yet extinct. It was not too late to rekindle the sacred fires. It was immaterial by whose hand the pious work was done. Dacian peasants had finished their task from Maximin and Decius to Diocletian and Justinian. The pure Greek race had always been excluded from the chief post; admirable bureaucrats (as the Moslem found) and theologians, they could administer and codify, but could not initiate or drive. The "Roman" government, even under the most religious and orthodox emperors, was never really in sympathy with the great ecclesiastical system which in turn supported, coerced, or cringed to it. Something of the spirit of Diocletian is to be found in Leo; an intense distrust of an *imperium in imperio*. He had the simple faith of a mountaineer; somewhat later he would have been an Albigensian or a Huguenot: debarred from political action, he might have been a Luther. Some see in him a Jew, a Mahometan, or a Unitarian; he clearly represents an afterwave of that great monotheistic revival which spread east and west from Arabia in the seventh century. Yet he is a convinced and believing Christian, and his legislation gives adequate proof of his sincerity.

B. Religious Reform and Political Reorganisation (717–775)

Obscurity and bias of 'Isaurian' Annalists.

§ 1. From a literary point of view the epoch of the Iconoclasts is a wilderness; our chief if not our sole authorities are Nicephorus the patriarch and

that confessor Theophanes who as a boy under Constantine V. mounted those stupendous icebergs which enabled men to compute time by the Great Frost. Their tale is told by enemies and perhaps calumniators. It is hard to reconcile the annals of two fierce yet incapable tyrants, persecuting their own subjects and flying before the foe, with the actual revival to be traced somewhat later in every branch of the administration and national life. Can such a recovery be traced to the initiative of cowardly and cruel monsters, enemies of all religion, as relentless as any pagan emperor before them in heaping insult and torment on God's saints? The legend certainly acquires strength and circumstantial detail as time goes on: Nicephorus and Theophanes say nothing of the burning of the Octagon Library; Zonaras and Georgius repeat the story and add the incredible fact that guards stationed at the doors saw to it that the professors perished with their parchments. Such a war against the *literati* recalls a similar crusade by Tsin-Hwang-Ti (*c.* 212 B.C.), first emperor of united and centralised China. It may be best to neglect the personal history of these two determined princes, to let events and the later condition of the empire tell its own tale. The scheme to keep the emperor a respectable nonentity (like a Merovingian or Japanese "Mikado" or Nepaulese prince) had broken down. Bulgars on one side, Arabs on the other, recalled to the affrighted Senate and bureaucrats dim legends of the terrible days of Phocas and Heraclius, when Avars and Persians had looked across the Propontis at each other's camp-fires. Anastasius II. (a clear-sighted and industrious civilian) had already begun to prepare for the coming attack from Islam, and no doubt Leo was indebted to his careful provision, for which, like Solomon, he obtained all the credit. Personal monarchy was restored in obedience to the popular will; for democracy is a good

Obscurity and bias of 'Isaurian' Annalists.

Popular approval at revival of Personal Rule.

Popular approval at revival of Personal Rule.

monarchist. There are no ministers, no intrigues, no side-influences to chronicle during these two reigns. The methods of Iconoclasm were direct; and Leo and Constantine went straight to their aim. So strong, indeed, were they that they could afford to despise a rising of many nobles and officials; and so intrepid that they never hesitated to include them in a religious persecution. The great Themes were divided out among four or five trusty followers or relatives, who remained long in office,—exerting the full powers that a viceroy can only enjoy under a centralised monarchy, feeling its way out of chaos towards a uniform administration. We have almost complete records (so ironical or tantalising is the muse of history) of the gradual estrangement and final rupture with the Papacy and the West; ample detail of the inconclusive attacks or forays of Bulgarian and Caliph; information far too full, minute, yet unconvincing, of the war instituted against superstition and monkish celibacy. But the legal, military, financial reforms are obscure,—and in these departments for our purpose lies the interest of this strange supremacy of Armenia, now become the heir of Roman tradition. It is very true of the epoch of Iconoclasm that a special study of its gross facts and events leaves one in utter ignorance of its real tendency or achievement. As with some faint star we must look away from the object of vision to detect it at all. We can only know it by examining the condition of the monarchy (in which Rome to the end recapitulated her own national story) *before* and *after* these important but puzzling reigns. Contrast the reign of Irene with those of the two usurpers who ruled a century before. We can see now what forces must have been at work to make this possible; an Athenian lady administered the empire by the help of a few household eunuchs, without question at home and not without credit abroad.

§ 2. A rough summary of the events of these reigns may be of help. The immediate Saracen peril was averted by the defeat of the assailants in the great siege of Byzantium in 718; the Caliph died of grief at the miscarriage of the Armada. Seven years pass in comparative security for the Asiatic provinces. In 726 Leo, who had already begun to persecute Jews and Montanists, turns his attention to the cult of images. In the next year the Moslem invasions begin again and continue as an annual border foray: Nice was attacked in vain. The Octagon Library was burnt in 730, deliberately or by accident, with or without its professors, according as we prefer to accept legend or interpret the character of Leo. For six years (733–739) there is almost no foreign news, save the tidings of discontent and alienation in Italy,—a part of the Byzantine annals which is a special study of itself and seems to have little or no connection with political changes in the east. Still the Saracens overran Asia Minor, and in 739 both emperors in person led their troops to a successful engagement in Phrygia. The next year Leo died, followed in 741 by Charles Martel and Gregory III. The interest of the reign is curiously divided between the circumstances of the separatist movement in Italy and a more or less avowed persecution of orthodoxy at home. Once the predominant Armenian influence, military and protestant, had been defied. Whether a national rising or a religious protest, the revolt of Cosmas with the Greek insurgents caused some anxiety to the central government. When the fleet of Agallianus (*τουρμάρχης τῶν Ἑλλαδικῶν*) was defeated and its leader drowned, Cosmas and Stephen are taken to the capital and publicly beheaded; the reign of Byzantine leniency had not yet begun. The elevation by Sergius of a phantom-emperor in Sicily under the now canonised name of Tiberius belongs to the western history of the empire, but may

Some events in Leo's reign (717–740).

Some events in Leo's reign (717–740).

be noted as a symptom of the dissolution which threatened the whole. The first years of Leo III. had been disquieted by suspicion of Anastasius II., still living in retirement; his predecessor Philippicus and his successor Theodosius being both alive. We have another interesting proof of the demoralising effect of civil strife. The last Heracliad had allied with Bulgarians to regain his throne, and given Terbelis the title of Cæsar. Cherson and Bardanes had invoked the aid of the Khazars; and in a later conflict between Leo's son and son-in-law we shall see both parties soliciting reinforcements from the infidels. Now Anastasius seeks help from Terbelis, is discovered and beheaded: there is one less in the number of surviving ex-emperors living in seclusion. By his death ends the most disastrous period for the Christian monarchy of Rome; at no time before or since was the imperial person so unsafe. Maurice, it is true, had been murdered and Phocas had suffered for the crime. The obscure conspiracy of the soap-dish had ended the mysterious reign of Constans III. But within the first twenty years of the eighth century, five crowned and anointed sovereigns had perished by violence. Justinian had celebrated his return by the massacre of the "lion and the adder," Leontius and "Aspimar"; he himself with his little son and colleague Tiberius V. had been cut off in a righteous vengeance; and in 719 the execution of Anastasius as a menace to the commonwealth might plead a similar justification.

Rebellion of Artavasdus: conflicting accounts of C. V. (750).

§ 3. To what category are we to assign the notable and serious sedition of Artavasdus the Armenian? Was it the effect of mere personal ambition or did it conceal a deeper motive? Was it merely the tentative of a sturdy general who felt that in the new order of things the throne was open to competition, and would be the prize not of the highest bidder but of the stoutest combatant? Was there a relic of the old, primitive, and puzzling rule in

which folk-tales abound, which gives the royal succession to the penniless stranger-pilgrim married to the king's daughter, rather than to the home-born son? or did the partisans of Artavasdus believe themselves to be fighting for some holy cause or principle? At any rate, the pretender holds the capital city for perhaps two years (740–743); and even while the pope's legate is bidden observe a punctilious neutrality until the duel is decided, the pope himself dates his letters by the Armenian name that intervenes so strangely in the imperial list. Husband of Anna, Leo's daughter, *Curopalat* (a dignity throughout our period, 550–1081, at least nominally next the throne), count of the turbulent Obsicians,—he no doubt believed in the justice of his claim. His prime-minister was the patrician Baktage, also an Armenian; and when the day was settled in favour of Constantine V. and the direct succession, Baktage was at once condemned to lose his head, whereas Artavasdus and his sons did not lose their eyes until they had essayed a fresh plot in vain. Thus the reign of Leo's son formally began three years after his father's death (743) and lasted on thirty-two years. As in his father's reign, a barren table of events can give a very poor clue to its meaning or importance. It would be easy to interpret it, by strictly recording facts, as the most disastrous to the Roman world since the days of Heraclius: he at least shed the lustre of brilliant if futile heroism on his early days. Within, the unpopular creed of Iconoclasm, forced against the patient obstinacy of the people by every means of ruthless violence and martial law; governors, mere partisans and mockers at order, justice, and piety; abroad, Italy lost, the Exarchate overthrown, Rome and Catholicism irrevocably estranged, the Moslem exulting unpunished in yearly depredations and slave-raids; Bulgarians insolent and aggressive; personally, a superstitious and cruel tyrant full of

Rebellion of Artavasdus: conflicting accounts of C. V. (750).

Rebellion of Artavasdus: conflicting accounts of C. V. (750).

magic and lechery, scarcely human in his abominable predilections for the odours and excrements of the stable, certainly in no conceivable sense a Christian; his pastime to yoke holy men with abandoned women and make the procession slowly parade the circus amidst the jeers of a time-serving mob. Fitting, indeed, that nature should add her catastrophes to the hideous tale of horrors in this reign of anti-Christ. The Great Frost (already spoken of) seemed, as in Norse legend, to herald the end of the world; the Great Plague swept over the shrunken confines of the empire, halved the population of the capital and made the Peloponnese a desert. Yet to us who can read Byzantine annals with a wide survey of the whole span, it is not difficult to see that the Iconoclastic era was one of undeniable recovery; and Finlay is perhaps not wholly wrong in believing it to be the dawn of the modern age, and incomparably the most important period in Rome's history.

Summary of chief events (740–775).

§ 4. On outward showing, indeed, the record is sufficiently poor and inconclusive. Shortly after the downfall of Artavasdus (744), Sisinnius, the emperor's cousin, to whom he owed the throne, is disgraced and blinded; in 746, some slight success was gained in distant Commagenè; in 747, the pestilence ravaged the empire and brought back the pitiable days of Justinian just 200 years before. In 750, the victory of the Abbassides gave new life to the Caliphate, and stirred up a powerful enemy of Rome: in the following year the Frankish Mayor displaced the Merovingian king, and Astolf put an end to the Exarchate in the capture of Ravenna. In 759, the Caliph Almansor seizes Melitenè, and next year advances into Cilicia and Pamphylia and cuts to pieces a Roman army. In 760, the emperor is personally defeated by Slavs, and loses two great officers in the battle, the δρόμου λογοθέτης and the commander of the Thracesians. In 763, a welcome

victory over the Bulgarians is tarnished by unusual brutality in the treatment of captives; they are handed over to the factions of the circus to kill. In 766, the Bulgarians retrieve their disgrace, and Constantine vents his wrath on his own subjects, persecuting and deriding the monks, while treating the great officials with a capricious cruelty, which might find a recent parallel in the madman Justinian II., but at no other epoch in Byzantine history. He had been thoroughly aroused by a formidable plot the year previous, in which several chief and responsible ministers were implicated. The emperor in 767 demands Gisela, daughter of Pepin, for his son Leo IV., with the old Exarchate for her dowry; the proposal is rejected. (Had Constantine succeeded in his request the course of history might have been altered by a single marriage; there would have been no Irene, no pretext for the assumption by Charles of the imperial title, perhaps instead a reconciliation of conflicting interest and Church usage.) Asia Minor was divided between three bluff and trusty henchmen of the emperor to persecute the orthodox as they listed and to repulse the Moslem; chief among these was Lachanodracon. After a lull of some years, tidings arrived (772) of another great reverse; the massed troops of those Asiatic generals are shamefully defeated at Sycè, a maritime fortress in Pamphylia. In 774, the Moslem again lead in a contemptuous foray for kidnapping and plunder; they seize 500 captives, but at Mopsuestia are attacked in ambush and lose double that number themselves. Constantine himself in the same year makes a great effort and puts 80,000 men into the field against the Bulgarians, a last enterprise, as events proved. This was in a great degree successful, and atoned in a measure for the northern humiliations and anxieties of his reign He was overtaken by death in 775 while preparing a second expedition.

Summary of chief events (740–775).

Indirect evidence entirely against this disappointing result.

§ 5. It is impossible to find here the record of a successful reign. Schlosser, Finlay, and to a certain extent the prudent Bury, have appeared as apologists for the character and policy of the Iconoclasts. The rancour of the two Church historians, both born in this reign (758), is quite apparent; but we do not judge by their wealth of epithets, but by facts which cannot be gainsaid. Discord within, loss or disgrace without, one half of the empire abroad, one half of the home population estranged; provinces given over to a brutal and violent soldiery, the factions of the capital encouraged to look on the massacre of captives of war as an afternoon's pastime, insults to religious orders and emblems as the chief duty of anti-clerical officials: the negative side of a secular (not an austere) protestantism could go no further. A historian may ignore the foolish gossip of the palace, which finds poison in every natural death and moral depravity in every innocent relation. But if we are rather to judge by the straightforward chronicle, the estimate can hardly be called satisfactory: the reign of Constantine V. must appear the very nadir of this period, grossly barbarous and violent, yet ineffective, the least Roman of all reigns. Indirect evidence, as we have stated, points to a very different conclusion. A society on the very point of dissolution received new life in every department. Law, commerce, agriculture, finance, military organisation, religious practice,—all are carefully revised and adapted to the new circumstances and the new inmates of the realm. The work of Heraclius, suspended during the thirty years of the madness of Justinian and its consequences, was resumed and completed. The loss of northern Italy was a gain; the attack on idol-worship and celibacy the obvious duty of a spirited and patriotic monarch; the frontier-defence against overwhelming odds a work nobly performed. It is impossible to do otherwise than to suspend, in this most puzzling reign

and character, the historical judgment. Against the barbarity of Constantine's punishments to Scamars, to monks, to prisoners of war, must be set the tenderness with which, abating his imperial dignity, he treated with pirates and preferred to ransom 2500 Roman subjects rather than imperil their lives; against the stories of his irreligion and dissolute Court we can adduce the piety of his daughter Anthemisia, who, nun though she was, lived on the most affectionate terms with this blasphemous "*mangeur des moines.*" Against the callous brutality of an age (searching fate, for instance, in the entrails of a new-born infant) can be alleged the deep interest of the imperial family, and doubtless of a wider society, in the novel foundling-hospitals which became later a marked feature in this civilised and compassionate world. The plain fact remains that we cannot reconcile the two series of facts. Somewhere, historical evidence is wilfully distorted or entirely at fault. We have to deal with two groups separately, which cannot be brought into harmony. And the most equitable method is this (indeed the sole guide for the ofttimes impertinent criticism of the student)—to give preference to the judgment which comes from *indirect* proof.

Indirect evidence entirely against this disappointing result.

§ 6. In this field we forget personalities and deal only with broad, social, or political tendencies. A survey of a great epoch and its unmistakable features makes us forget the petty trivialities and bitterness of individual human life. We have asserted, and shall find occasion to repeat, that the empire was rapidly changing in this age; it may claim the gentler verdict usually passed on a period of transition. The population shifted; the lower classes became more and more *Slavonic;* the upper, increasingly *Armenian.* Whatever the apparent insecurity of these two reigns, confidence was reviving; stability in trade, tillage, and commerce reappeared. Property was more safe; estates and

Recovery due to resumption of direct monarchic control.

Recovery due to resumption of direct monarchic control,

titles were transmitted without anxiety to descendants. We begin to see notable feudal families of warriors born and bred. The military and official classes show no brilliant meteors out of the void, coming, none know from whence, and while a spectator looks, vanishing to leave no trace; but steady transmission by a fixed routine of training and discipline, such as had in earlier times brought to unparalleled efficiency the twin services of Rome. Once more in the stress of the infidel siege and other perils, the monarchy resumes its direct and emphatic control. Perhaps (as modern historians suggest) the chief domain of "Isaurian" success was neither religion and military reform or frontier defence, but finance; the internal economy centralised and careful, without which a Socialistic commonwealth, like the empire its prototype, could not for a moment endure. I gladly accept Bury's suggestion, or rather inspiration, that Constans III. (after his senatorial tutelage) drew to himself the management of the budget and revenue, and that henceforward a Byzantine sovereign was largely a glorified Chancellor of the Exchequer. Army, Civil Service, ordinary administration—these could go on smoothly on the well-worn grooves of tradition; but financial methods and sources of income require (as we know too well to-day) constant readjustment. The independence of the minister is a thing of the past; the very title disappears; we meet with no more *counts of the sacred largesses;* before 700 the term is obsolete. A *logothete* is not a minister, but a secretary, a clerk, like a trusted freedman in those great households of the later republic on which the imperial rule was modelled. Leo III. is said to have suddenly increased the taxes (727); it is certain that, like Charles Martel, he resumed some of the superfluous wealth of the Church, besides seizing the Petrine patrimonies in the East. I believe that as Tiberius III. began with the help of his brother

especially in Finance.

Heraclius to reorganise the army, so Anastasius II. in civil matters attempted to repair, to provide, and to retrench. The election of Theodosius III. the revenue-officer was a caricature of a real change in the attitude and functions of monarchy. The emperor until the days of spendthrift Michael III. will be once again the business-like head of a household; keeping careful accounts of profit and loss, of income, expenditure, and waste, and not delegating the resources of the empire like an idle landlord to unscrupulous bailiffs.

Recovery due to resumption of direct monarchic control, especially in Finance.

C. The Emperor, the Church, and the Aim of Government in the Period of Iconoclasm (717–802)

§ 1. Slight but certain indications point to the increasing influence of the clergy in the State during the Heraclian period. If we are venturesome, we may boldly hazard the conjecture that while the civil administration was almost extinguished, and in the end supplanted by military dictators and major-generals, the clergy and bishops found themselves everywhere charged with such duties as the soldier cannot perform. The infallible token of "mediævalism" is the predominance of the priest and the warrior, the rough division of society between those who pray and those who fight. Here we have the two natural extremes of a primitive society. The epicene civilian, neither brave nor devout, but only orderly and methodical, is a late, and perhaps a degenerate product, like the bank-clerk. The Byzantine world, after the Great Plague of Justinian's reign, was fast slipping back into barbarism; and by this I would imply a return to the rudiments, a reaction against an artificial culture, uniform and pacific, and against alien methods of government. Respect for the State and deference to law give place to a dread of the unseen powers and their hierophants, to

Barbarism of the empire after 550: influence of priests.

Barbarism of the empire after 550: influence of priests.

admiration for the strong and relentless hand. History is forced once more to become mere biography. What are the annals of the sixth century but the personal records of Theodoric and Theodora, Justinian and Belisarius, Maurice and Phocas? It is still more true of the seventh century; the emperor, an isolated figure, occupies the whole stage. It is a time, too, of barbarous punishments. The unfortunate slave-girl who without intention dishonours the passing bier of Heraclius' first wife is burnt alive; and we have noticed that this same emperor strives in vain to save a supposed Marcionite from the flames. While the Shah skins his unsuccessful general, Phocas kindles the faggots for his victims; and we have to go back to the reign of Valentinian I. (364-375) for such Draconian severity. However "Roman" in theory the pretensions or ideals of Heraclius, it cannot be doubted that in his reign new or primitive customs and institutions blotted out in large tracts of the empire all memories of a strictly "Roman" tradition. The priests had not merely (as they hoped) an exact and infallible chart of the next world, but a scheme of conduct and a "map of life" for this. Their attitude was not that of the Justinianean Code; Leo's legislation acknowledges and ratifies the subtle change that had taken place in the century preceding his collection. The orthodox clergy in the East were never so patient with ordinary life as their brethren in the West; they were not the exclusive repositories of learning. The monasteries they founded in such reckless abundance (as the certain remedies for the universal decay) were not centres of active life, but in the main homes for contemplation and the practice of the most private and intangible virtues. Yet we cannot close our eyes to the wide increase in sacerdotal and patriarchal influence. The new titles of office are borrowed from the Church; and

so are the men who wear them. We saw the use of "*Sacellarius*" extended from the cathedral to the palace; and we acknowledge with a sigh that it is derived from "*saccus*," not "*sacellum*," and implies rather a Bursar than a Sacristan. We find monks summoned from a cloistered retreat to the management of finance and budget; and, thus gradually prepared for this curious intermingling or exchange of function, we can read without surprise that John the Deacon is first Chancellor of the Exchequer and then Generalissimo against the Arabs. The priest was plainly ousting the civilian, and even daring to compete with the soldier.

Barbarism of the empire after 550: influence of priests.

§ 2. Every established order, however honourable in age or fortune, must find an opposition. The Senate may have curtailed of set purpose the exercise of imperial prerogative; and, as M. Pobyedonestcheff confesses, reduced to an almost irreducible minimum the possible moments of its effective intervention. The imperial line, from the Adoptive or Balkan emperors of the fifth century, struggled against abuse and corruption in their own agents. The servants of despotism regarded with covert jealousy or scorn the supreme authority which had made them what they were. The orthodox churchmen looked with suspicion on the religious tolerance or suspected heresy of the sovereign; the patriarch attempted to make a compact before bestowing the crown. And the armies which even in the earliest days of discipline had excited now and again the apprehension of the central power, might once more create disturbance when restored to order and efficiency. The character of the opposition under the Isaurians, though we may detect traces of all these secret foes, is mainly ecclesiastical. But the wide influence of this class, as it penetrated deep into ordinary life, made the Iconoclastic duel no mere crusade against an unreformed establishment, but a general contest, in which on one side

Orthodox opposition to Iconoclasm.

Leo seeks to weaken Church's influence.

or the other every class in the State was enrolled and marshalled as an eager partisan. While the patriarch becomes the recognised critic, in some part the creator, on occasion the dangerous rival, of the monarch, it is probable that could we penetrate the provincial gloom we should find the bishop occupying a pre-eminent position in the lesser towns. Had not the Alexandrine pontiff under Heraclius been also charged with a prefect's function and empowered to negotiate a delicate question of diplomacy? They would act, as in the West, in default of regular civilian appointments, as administrative officials. The bishop had become, without effort or ambition, the head of the municipality, the "Patron of the Borough." Whether he intervened seldom or often, he was in any case the ultimate arbiter and referee, judge and civil governor in one. In many places regular intercourse with the capital had completely broken down during the strange and obscure movements of the seventh century. The Isaurian enactments show plainly that the once vaunted uniformity of Roman law had disappeared, giving way to the local usage, which sprang up naturally like the "custom" of the Western manor, or was introduced by the countless settlers of alien race,—Slavs, Gotho-Greeks, Mardaites, welcomed or tolerated by the infinite patience or extreme need of Rome. Monks are to the fore in revolutions, and the whole clerical society was in closer sympathy with the people than with the governing class. Finlay remarks, with his usually correct insight, that the clergy took "more trouble to conciliate public opinion than official favour"; "abbots were often men of wealth and family"; and he warns us not to be surprised to see monks "acting the part of the demagogue." Leo III., convinced Puritan as he is, does not seek merely to purify the Church from superstition; he is concerned to maintain, like every Roman emperor, the supremacy

of the State over a rival, to rescue the imperial power from becoming the tool of a faction. He is undertaking the same task and courting the same disasters as his brothers of the Western line in later days. There is indeed not a little of the *furor Teutonicus* in the severe Ironside soldier and his Anatolics and Armeniacs, as they descend to rescue New Rome from an incapable government and the debased religion which had corrupted it.

Leo seeks to weaken Church's influence.

§ 3. We have no intention of following closely the phases of the Iconoclastic controversy. We are contented with the true statement that its motive was as much political as religious. In the involution or confusion of the secular and sacred spheres, it is often difficult to find the real spring of action. In the Reformation, in the Great Rebellion in England, in the French Revolution, we may seek to discriminate the exact proportion of the two. We shall no doubt discover in the first a large predominance of the political; in the second, of the religious; in the last, a puzzling confusion of ingredients, a godless but still idealistic religionism upholding political or rather social and humanitarian claims;—claims which, as we recognise to-day, can never again be fired with a similar zeal. Interwoven intricately were the threads of the two under the Isaurians. For good or ill, the empire had taken a side and become a partisan with Constantine. Never more could it regain the indifferent and unruffled composure of a Gallio,—the attitude of impartial arbiter among all warring creeds and principles, because it lacked any of its own. The Saracen success was largely due to the misguided attempts to impose religious uniformity. The motive was political, and the dissentients were justly suspected of disloyalty. But it was none the less to be regretted that the archaic and impartial sovereignty, or rather suzerainty, had passed away. Either the State would be distracted by religious feud and the emperor pulled about between various factions, or

Anti-Clericalism and State-supremacy.

Anti-Clericalism and State-supremacy.

he would become a humble if majestic puppet secretly controlled by the dominant and tyrannical Orthodoxy. As with the modern Reformers, Leo's protestantism only substituted one form of intolerance for another; and the commonwealth was no nearer unity than before,—or to that good-natured yet not careless "agreement to differ" about those serious and personal matters which can never safely become the concern of the State.—Yet it would be unfair indeed to overlook the merits of free-speech, and the bold tenacity of purpose in the Eastern Church. It is true that, in the annals of mankind, in the development and advance of the free spirit, it can never claim the same gratitude that we give without grudging to the Church of Rome. But in this age, while we sometimes appear to regret its influence and to encourage this typical Henry VIII. in his Erastian work of humbling its pride,—we cannot forget its services to subject and rulers alike, in providing an organ for constitutional criticism and opposition. We refer frequently to the dangers of State-monopoly and State-absolutism,—dangers to which the modern mind seems oddly insensible. Let us not then forget the part played by the outspokenness of a patriarch, the calm debate of a General Council, the "framework of customs, opinions, and convictions" which (as Finlay so well says) "could be with difficulty altered and rarely opposed without danger." Indeed, Constantinople has always seen a religious law or hierarchy, a theocracy, enthroned above an autocratic sovereign. Both *basileus* and "padishah" have to recognise this restriction on a power otherwise irresponsible.

Value of counterpoise to State-absolutism.

The Protestants of Armenia against Hellenism: success and reaction under C. VI. (c. 800).

§ 4. Just as religion and political motive are inextricably tangled, so even under political reasons we can detect the presence of a still simpler cause of conflict. The religious wars of Europe depend largely on race and nationality; and we see clear trace in our Byzantine monarchy of a cleavage of society depending on this difference of stock. The

eighth century marks the insurgence of Armenia against Hellenism and Orthodoxy. And when the victory is assured, there appears also a severance in the dominant faction. The revolutions in the "Twenty Years of Anarchy" were the work of the Asiatic soldier; now sullen, recalcitrant, and unpatriotic, now stern and determined to undertake the task of reorganising the collapsed fragments of a great tradition. The significance of the two years' contest for the throne after Leo's death (740–743) may be exaggerated by the pragmatic historian; but it is impossible not to read in the rebellion of Artavasdus (or rather in the support it enlisted) something more than a mere sally of disappointed ambition. The provincial regiments, now as formerly the umpires of the monarchy, take different sides in the contest of son and son-in-law; Armeniacs and Obsicians stand for Artavasdus, Thracensians and the ever-faithful Anatolics, for the direct heir Constantine V. It cannot be doubted that the effect of the new and permanent provincial armies was to divide Lesser Asia into as many divisions as mediæval Germany; for "*duchies*" read "*themes*." Under Constantine VI. there is the same conflict: the Armeniacs maintain throughout their irreconcilable enmity to Irene, Hellene, orthodox, and iconodule. In 790, the Asiatic *themes* (except this regiment) swear reluctant allegiance to the successful restorer of images, and then proclaim her son sole emperor. When in misguided devotion to his mother the young prince insists on her recognition by the Asiatic troops, the Armeniacs again hold out; they burst into open mutiny and blind the generals he sends. In 797, he endeavours to escape to the Anatolics, who are conspicuous for their loyalty to the direct line of succession. It is difficult to attach any certain political importance to the persistent attempts to raise the uncles of Constantine VI. to the throne. It may be easily believed that they were the figure-heads of the

The Protestants of Armenia against Hellenism: success and reaction under C. VI. (c. 800).

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Iconoclastic party, and were constantly employed by their mischievous friends as a pretext for rebellion throughout the reign of Leo IV., of Constantine VI., and of Irene (775–802). So late as 799, the Helladic *theme* enters the list of conspirators, and proposes to raise one of these unfortunate princes to a position for which he had neither aptitude nor desire. Even in the reign of Michael I. (811–813) the names of these luckless Cæsars are whispered in the discontented circles of the capital; perhaps for the fifth time these innocent victims of others' treason are discovered, pardoned, and removed to a securer exile. I do not profess to understand the sudden subsidence of this once redoubtable military influence. But it is possible—nay, probable—that the eunuch-régime of Irene deliberately starved the army; and was not content with merely ordering that "no military leaders should converse with Stauracius." It must be remembered that the Armeniacs had been humbled, decimated, and perhaps disbanded for their sedition; one thousand were sent into exile bearing the convict brand, "This is an Armenian conspirator." Certain it is that after the comparative peace of Irene's sole reign, Nicephorus I. (like most Byzantine sovereigns at the opening of a new century) is confronted by the imperative need of national defence; and earned an undesirable renown by the firmness with which he pressed its claims and the failure which awaited his efforts.

CHAPTER VI

CHARACTER AND AIMS OF THE PRETENDERS AND MILITARY REVOLTS IN THE NINTH CENTURY: GRADUAL ACCEPTANCE OF LEGITIMACY (802–867)

Suspension of dynastic principle: throne open to Armenian adventurer.

§ 1. FROM the accession of Leo VI. of ambiguous parentage, or from the universal acknowledgment of his strictly illegitimate son, termed half in irony the "purple-born,"—public opinion or its Byzantine substitute veers round to legitimacy. We have shown how, in the coming age, the pretender and supplanter of a feeble or pacific sovereign gives place to the "Shogun," a vigorous and responsible colleague; who may sometimes forget his respect for the dynasty, but will never attempt to overthrow it. I purpose, in order to explain this seeming paradox, to examine the significant features of the reigns and the mutinies immediately following the usurpation of Irene, and the failure of the Hellenic attempt to seize the helm of State. The success of an Arabian (?) of royal descent again reminded pretenders that the chief post was open to the adventurer. Nicephorus I. has the proud distinction of setting an example of humanitarian leniency, which he had not inherited from his predecessor, which his followers did not always imitate. He had to face in the revolt of Bardanes a formidable Armenian cabal. The pretender leant on the support of two future emperors, Leo and Michael, and of Thomas the Slav (who will soon claim our notice); two Armenians, a Phrygian, and a Slavonic settler; but this last is said to have had one Armenian parent. When his friends desert him and make terms with the gloomy but determined Arabian, Bardanes is allowed to

Suspension of dynastic principle: throne open to Armenian adventurer.

become a monk: and we must dissociate Nicephorus from any complicity with the ruffians who burst into his monastic retreat and deprived him of sight. Arshavir, also Armenian, in his rebellion of 808 depends on active and aristocratic support in the capital itself; on the failure of the plot, Nicephorus obliges him to don the monastic habit, with the same indulgence that afterwards prompts him to confine a dangerous monk and assassin as a lunatic. The reigns of Michael I. and of Leo V. belong to the annals of successful conspiracies, and the latter Armenian takes his place with legitimate sovereigns. It is on his death that the Armenian faction once more bursts out and causes not merely a serious disturbance, but a permanent damage to the continent of Asia Minor, now the chief home of "Roman" wealth and stability. Thomas, the son of a Slavonian and an Armenian, was in Armenia itself on the news of the sudden and violent death of Leo V. (820). He resents the success of his brother-in-arms, the low-born Phrygian Michael of Amorium, whom some suspected of gipsy blood, all of heterodoxy or religious indifference. During the years 820 and 821 he overran all Asia Minor, and actually controlled the administration and appointed officials in the *themes*, with the exception of the *Armeniac* and *Obsician* (and we have no occasion to wonder at the unsympathetic attitude of the former regiment, for we may suppose that, after Constantine's severe treatment in 790, and the drafting of the mutineers into other detachments, or even actual exile, the new legions were reconstituted without native support; thus *Armeniacs* ceased at that moment to represent an Armenian nation).

Socialist 'Jacquerie' in Asia Minor (c. 820),

§ 2. This serious sedition had a singular character and interest. It presents features elsewhere associated with the rising of a later Jacquerie or the "Bagaudage" of third-century Gaul. It might be called a social revolution, a definite protest against the whole system of

imperial government and class-privilege, against the fiscal exactions which the needs of the empire had suggested to Nicephorus I. But we must not hastily attribute modern motives to ancient insurrections; we shall content ourselves with the actual words of the Greek historians. Theophanes is no longer our trusty guide; and we are dependent on the Continuators, who completed his work under the direction and encouragement of Constantine VII. *ἐντεῦθεν κ. δοῦλοι κατὰ δεσποτῶν κ. στρατιώτης κατὰ ταξεώτου κ. λοχαγὸς κατὰ στρατηγέτου τὴν χεῖρα φονῶσαν καθώπλιζε.*[1] It is tempting to recognise here the familiar career of a social reformer, of a "friend of the people." The birth of Thomas was exceedingly obscure, and he was in every way a fitting rival to the ignorant Phrygian, whom accident and audacity had fixed on the throne of the Cæsars and made the founder of the longest and most illustrious dynasty and period in our later annals. He had lived among the Saracens, and perhaps imbibed some of that democratic idealism found behind most movements of fanatical religion. He was currently supposed to be the long-deposed Constantine VI., and is reported to have negotiated for an imperial coronation in Syrian Antioch. Since the accession of the "Isaurians" the capital had not been exposed to civil war, and the Arabian peril had united its inhabitants in a common duty and a religious service. But the old Roman tradition and precedent demanded that a pretender should march, like Vespasian or Heraclius, like Tiberius Apsimar or Theodosius III., upon the metropolis; and perhaps that city has to thank the unwitting Bulgarians for their escape from Thomas' undisciplined and plundering levies. Reduced by their sudden attack and taking refuge in Adrinople or Arcadiopolis, he is surrendered to the Imperialists, and with his son subjected to the most cruel punishment that stains

Socialist 'Jacquerie' in Asia Minor (c. 820),

[1] Genesius.

Socialist 'Jacquerie' in Asia Minor (c. 820),

the record of Byzantine justice. Yet his death does not extinguish the rising; like the Isaurian revolt under Anastasius, the mutiny, whether social or military or personal, still smouldered in Cabala and Samaria; and we may note with amusement or dismay that the capitulation of this last stronghold was due to the treachery of a churchman, who demanded and obtained an archbishopric as the price of his secret aid.

without definite political aim.

§ 3. I am not able to follow Finlay's suggestive musings on the intrinsic character or political lesson of this revolt; his theory of a large Asiatic population excluded (for social and religious reasons) from all public and local affairs and smarting with this indignity, is ingenious but not wholly convincing. Nor can I entirely endorse the following criticism or prediction: "Had Thomas been a man of powerful mind, he might have laid the foundation of a new State of society in the Eastern empire by lightening the burden of taxation, carrying out toleration for religious opinions, securing an impartial administration of justice even to heretics, and giving every class of subjects, without distinction of nationality or race, equal security for their lives and property."

I do not see traces in the Asiatic revolution of anything more serious than a *nationalist* rising against an insecure throne usurped from a compatriot, headed by a man of energy but without political principle and constructive power, calling to itself all the obscure forces of discontent and disorder, which are borne to the surface in periods of transition and religious crisis. Nothing so definite was in their minds as a conscious protest against the forms and methods of the imperial system: they demanded only (as the Teutons of old) to have their share and to enjoy, not to overthrow. It may be questioned whether the Asiatic had "taken up arms against religious intolerance." There appear few

signs of a religious character; and I am inclined to set down this so-called "Socialist" revolt to much the same causes as divided the continent between Artavasdus and Constantine V. eighty years earlier. It is idle even to suggest to the actors in the drama of antique history that they shall be animated by the same motives that appeal to us in our latter-day indifference or "enlightenment." Only the worst and feeblest of the Roman princes accepted the principle of religious tolerance; and a "new State of society" on the lines of modern and modest Liberalism (such as Finlay sketches) would have shortly collapsed in bankruptcy and disorder before domestic and foreign foes. But I can heartily applaud the concluding remark, which deserves all praise for its candour and political sagacity; it is no small concession to truth to abandon the principles and hopes which elsewhere he upholds, as a "popular" historian. "The spirit of the age," he allows with regret, "was averse to toleration, and the sense of justice was so defective that these equitable principles could only have been upheld by the power of a well-disciplined and mercenary army." Indeed, it is impossible not to see that the faults and abuses of the system lay rather with the people than with the government. The emperor himself seems always in the van of progress, and attempts in vain to allay the fierce feuds of the religious spirit. Neither justice nor worship nor finance could have been safely left to the discretion of these rancorous and vaguely separatist factions or races, which only the imperial system held together in a semblance of amity. And in the suggestion of an alien and indifferent army of mercenaries (such as was just about to bear heavily on the Caliphate) we have an omen of the coming time,—when the national or provincial legions of the earlier "*Thematic*" system are to be displaced by the professional militia and the Norman soldier of fortune.

Intolerant spirit of the age.

Feuds of monk and soldier.

§ 4. In this age there are signs of such undying feud and bitterness between monks and soldiers as leave little justification for hopes of amicable settlement, *without* a central power somewhat indifferent to the whole disturbance. Leo V. (it has been well said) holds the balance between "monks who demanded the persecution of Iconoclasts, and the army who wanted the abolition of images." The soldiers were largely rough puritan zealots, like Scotsmen among the superstitions of Spain. The persecution of Nicephorus might seem to reflect discredit on Leo; but the emperor was satisfied with deposing an impossible colleague, and the kind treatment of the patriarch is only an instance of the mildness of this second Iconoclast victory. Although his successor was an alien heretic, and cared nothing for orthodoxy, law, or learning, there came over him the wonderful change we mark in so many selfish pretenders to the purple when they have attained their wish. He becomes firm and far-sighted, sincere and equitable; and we cannot regret that the lowly dynasty, destined for so great a renown, was not interrupted in the earliest moment of its life by a "social revolution." Michael II. allies himself with the "Isaurian" house; and prevails on the Senate and Patriarch to request formally his union with Euphrosyne, daughter of Constantine VI. Meantime, the provincial regiments were weakened by the operation of physical laws and deliberate imperial plans. Since the middle of the seventh century, they had been the nurseries of a vague revival in religious and patriotic feeling; they had taken a serious and active part in the elevation of sovereigns and the purging of ecclesiastical abuse. But if they were a safeguard, they were also a menace; and the turbulence of the *Armeniacs* in 790 led, as we have seen, to the disbanding of the homogeneous battalions,—recruited, we cannot doubt, like an earlier Roman legion, in the very district

Emperors ignorant or heterodox.

Weakening of regimental spirit.

where they were quartered. Whether distrusted by the sovereign, divided, weakened, or diversified by introduction of new elements, the *thematic* armies lose that distinctive character which marked them during the Heraclian and Isaurian reigns. We have hesitated, when dealing with the unwarlike supineness of the older citizen of Rome, whether to blame the contented sloth of the subject or the jealous suspicions of their ruler; and we may perhaps decide to divide the blame or the responsibility between the two. Once more, a strong local militia became a source of danger; and once more, recourse was had to that last expedient of a wealthy and enervated civilisation,—foreign and mercenary troops. Native recruits may have failed; vast tracts of country during the "Social War" of Thomas must have passed into desert and let in the jungle; and we can see preparing the later accumulation of land in a few hands, which is the most characteristic feature of the age of the "Shoguns" (920–1025).

Weakening of regimental spirit.

§ 5. We have to look in an unexpected quarter for the next mutiny. The motive is neither religious nor political, nor yet again social. It is purely mediæval, and must remind one rather of the temptations of Sir John Hawkwood and of the "Age of the Condottieri." We find under the valiant and unfortunate Theophilus (829–842) (a match in the imperial series to Caliph Haroun, as a hero of romance and chivalry)—a force of 30,000 Persians stationed at Sinope, under the command of Theophobus. At one time we hear of their valour and good faith, at another of their dangerous sedition: now at the battle of Dasymôn they alone support the emperor when the native troops desert; now they proclaim their general, and though once coerced and disbanded, again torment Theophilus in his last days with the fears of an independent principality, such as many soldiers of fortune carved out in the West. Once again, the *Armeniac* theme

Revolt of Persian contingent at Sinope.

Revolt of Persian contingent at Sinope.

became a centre of disaffection: and the dying commands of the emperor ensured the succession of his son at the cost of a faithful life.

Close of the Era of 'Pronunciamentos.'

Whatever the shortcomings of Michael II, in birth, education, or character; whatever the extravagance or the crimes of Theophilus, there can be no doubt that under their strong personal government the State recovered its strength and stability. And this recuperation is specially to be noticed in domestic matters. The age of "Pronunciamentos," of rough military insurrections, is past and over; the theory and principles of legitimacy enter deeply into the national sentiment; and the sanguinary change of dynasty in 867 must have taken the appearance, except to a few accomplices, of a peaceful succession of a legally adopted Cæsar. The reign of Michael III. (842–867), his long minority and unhappy reign, was a period of a sudden and general relaxation of restraint. Within a month of the death of Theophilus, his widow had made her peace with the Church (Feb. 19, 842), and the second epoch of Iconoclastic supremacy came to an end. Orthodoxy and luxury joined hand in hand to celebrate the new pact between the Church and the Government. Though the image-breakers had never sanctioned ascetic rigour, yet they were somehow connected in the popular mind with sternness, precision of conduct, and a simple and puritan worship. A sublime and dramatic pageant, aided and enhanced by music, colour, and odours, was once more in fashion; and as in the very similar period of the English Restoration, manners seem to throw off control with the revival of the Orthodox creed and practice.

Restoration of Image-worship.

§ 6. Once more reappears, with dignity and ceremonious prestige unimpaired, the long unfamiliar name of the Senate. This ancient assembly of officials, retiring into discreet obscurity during the personal government of Isaurians and the disorders of military revolutions, resumes its forgotten rights.

The Council of State ratifies the will of Theophilus, and may be expected to support the pious desire of Theodora to restore honour to images. It solemnly receives and audits the accounts which the empress makes up towards the close of her regency, with a laudable sense of responsibility and that conception of office as a public trust and not a private patrimony, to which in that age every other nation or government was an utter stranger.—The revival of Orthodox practice and belief is attended by a recourse to violence in matters spiritual. Yet we must not judge too harshly of the persecutors of the Paulicians; though we cannot fail to regret that after the lenient example of the later Iconoclasts, the Church could make no better use of her recovered pre-eminence than to institute civil war. But when we have once allowed the fact and principle then prevailing everywhere, of the identity or closest implication of Church and State, we have gone far to provide an apology for the saddest feature in Christian annals,—persecution for difference of creed. We may indeed distrust the virulence and bias of those partisans who tell us of the Antinomian doctrine and anti-social acts of the Cathari in Western Europe. We may class them with the ancient slander of the blameless Manichæan, with the pagan calumny of Thyestean banquets and nocturnal orgies among early Christians, with the undying legend of the Christian boy, enticed and crucified in some mediæval ghetto. But, granting the peculiar view then prevalent alike with reactionary and reformer, the interdependence of State and Church, and giving ever so slight a foundation for these vague and dreadful rumours,—we arrive at the conclusion that the mediæval heretic could not fail to be considered an enemy of the State,—like Vitalian, whom the Senate pronounces ἀλλότριος τῆς πολιτείας, a stranger to the commonwealth, to the social order. It must be noted that it is the populace

Restoration of Image-worship.

Intolerant dread of heretics.

Intolerant dread of heretics.

who display the greatest rancour and intolerance. The early Christians fell victims not to the tyranny of provincial governors, but to the spasmodic outbursts of democratic resentment. We have seen Heraclius pleading with the mob for the life of a "Marcionite": and we read without surprise the mediæval chronicler, who tells us that the people "dreaded the weak indulgence of the clergy" in regard to some Albigensian suspect. I need not appeal to the strange and horrible torments which are reserved to-day for certain criminals in America, whom public opinion places beyond the pale of law and rescues from the official gaoler to inflict a more cruel and lingering death. Of recent days, the vindictive displeasure of the mob has demanded in Monaco, in France, in Switzerland, a more instant and serious penalty than the State had either power or desire to inflict; and the rough but summary justice which the people claim to exert must indeed surprise those humanitarians who would rebuild the body politic on a fanciful idealisation of average human nature.

Paulician persecution largely political.

§ 7. The Paulicians were traitors to the commonwealth; Carbeas their leader has no scruple in joining the Emir of Melitene, in ravaging "Roman" territory, in establishing a republican stronghold at Tephricè somewhat later, bearing a certain resemblance to the Assassin's fortress at Alamut. Whatever the exasperation which drove them to these extreme measures, the duty of the central government could contemplate no concession to this faction of disloyal renegades. Under the Isaurians, the monks of Athos had assumed that curious autonomy, which still survives to-day, beneath the looser and less exacting government of the Turks. The restoration of orthodoxy placed these political dissenters once more among faithful subjects; but a similar licence could not be extended to the half-Jewish Socialists, who were far nearer Islam than any current

form of Gospel-teaching. In the recent conflict of England with the Boers, we have listened to severe attacks on the plain duty of Imperialism; and the thinking world will always be divided between the champions of centralism and the apostles of nationality, local franchise, and "partikularismus." It is possible, even allowing a measure of just indignation against this half-religious, half-political persecution, to sum up in very favourable fashion both the policy of the imperial regents in the middle of the ninth century and the whole systematic government of the "Isaurians," which had laid the foundation of order and prosperity during the previous century. The general moral and social condition of the people was incomparably superior to any other nation or group then existing. The practice of arms and the manlier virtues had once more become popular among the Byzantine nobles; and though discretion tempered valour, they had little to learn even from the later and more perfect lights of Western chivalry. At the same time, the military class enjoyed no undue preponderance. By some obscure and sagacious measures, the prestige of the provincial regiment had been modified; and the army had been "denationalised" and placed aloof from all civic or local prejudice and partiality. Equity and law regained their sway and commerce flourished. Wherever the lesser agents of authority threw off control, the emperor, so far as a single overseer can prove effective, levelled all, even his own consort, under iron and inflexible rules which knew "no respect of persons."

Paulician persecution largely political.

Successful revival of central prestige (c. 840).

DIVISION B

TRIUMPH OF THE PRINCIPLE OF LEGITIMACY

CHAPTER VII

CHANGES IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE METHODS OF AUTOCRACY AND IN THE OFFICIAL WORLD FROM THE REGENCY (MICHAEL III.)

A. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CAUSES DETERMINING THE DEVELOPMENT

A new departure: Regency and Legitimacy.

§ 1. IT must be evident to any student of Byzantine annals that from the middle of the ninth century a change came over the character and administration of the "Romans." The methods of government were profoundly modified. In one direction, sovereignty became purely Oriental and despotic; in another, the peculiar features of a feudal society emerged and became strong against the palace and all central control. The period was one of rapid recovery, increasing confidence, and growing wealth. The hereditary right of infants was conceded, and (as we have so often pointed out) side by side with a legitimate heir grew up the double and rival powers of the premier and the generalissimo. In the long minorities of Michael III. or of Basil II., in the perpetual tutelage of Leo VI. and Constantine VII. a situation arises closely resembling Scottish history; in which, under nominal respect for claims of birth, the Regency becomes the prize for the strongest and most adventurous. The Heraclian and Syrian houses had been remarkable instances of reigning monarchs, who from father to son never relaxed a personal

control of affairs; who understood the situation, chose their own ministers, did their own task, and hid behind no legal fiction that "the king can do no wrong." This is the antique tradition of the empire, that which sets apart the ingenious system of Augustus from other sovereignties. Accident or real merit conferred on hereditary princes a rare liking for work and an unrivalled capacity for taking trouble. In the middle of the ninth century, at the moment when the Carolingian house and Caliphate were both in decay, a new departure was made,—in the regency during Michael III.'s minority. The four sovereigns, who between them almost account for 170 years (886–1055), Leo, Constantine, Basil, Zoë, were alike born in the purple; the Augustus retreats into the palace; round him collects a valuable atmosphere of sentiment and affection; and the turbulent and free-spoken populace vent their spleen or discontent on the secondary or derivative regents. Pulcheria had governed in the name of Theodosius II.; and Irene had guided and at last supplanted her son, like the late empress in China. But the minority of Michael had wider and more lasting consequences. It became the normal type instead of the exception. For a quarter of a century, Basil II. tried to revert to the traditions of direct and laborious personal monarchy. But this austere example was popular neither with his subjects nor with his successors. To the end of our period, the despot continues to be ignorant and pliable or to struggle at intervals in vain against the disadvantages of this seclusion. Few countries, perhaps, are so unlucky as those where the nominal and responsible master is a dupe. It was to the interest of the official and the military class to maintain this illusion. A system like the Roman, without any fixed principles, in spite of its apparent rigour and routine, was always exposed to the sudden shock and revolution which expelled a dynasty or imposed a tutor and guardian upon an

A new departure: Regency and Legitimacy.

Personal monarchy in abeyance.

Personal monarchy in abeyance.

infant or an imbecile. But the permanent officials knew how to turn these exceptional episodes to advantage. The new emperor or regent was solitary and his new dignity precarious. The sudden veering of military favour might displace as it had exalted him; and if the "king's government was to be carried on," the newcomer must invoke the old servants and familiar methods, rely on their advice and accept their judgment; or throw himself into the arms of some powerful "chamberlain"; or, once again, divide the chief offices among his own family. The reign of Basil I., an adroit Armenian who had known the extreme of want and destitution, was no exception. He is regarded as the consolidator of Byzantine despotism, which up to that time had known mitigating or rival elements; as the last in a long series of political reformers from Diocletian and Justinian to Leo III. But it is more than probable that the measures, commonly supposed to ensure the direct initiative and personal will of the sovereign, merely implied the transference of control from the Senate to the palace, and in fact only set the seal upon an accomplished fact, a silent revolution which had long taken effect.

Palace-government.

§ 2. The Civil Service still lingered, a useful counterpoise to the soldier. But it was no longer supreme. It had somehow decayed, and its traditions of training, discipline, and promotion were forgotten. It had lost that initial axiom of a centralised bureaucracy, that the person of the ultimate authority was indifferent. It had, in a word, become a partisan. Everywhere else, the notion of an incorporeal abstract State or Commonwealth was obscured by private ends. Feudalism, within fifty years, had completely ruined the edifice of Charles. The Caliph without power or conviction had become a prisoner, the victim of his servants' insolence: he is without a mission; he was no longer the vicegerent of God. When the conception of the State is weak or obscured,

the personal tie is strong. The loyal affection shown by the people to Constantine VII. or to Zoë betrays a kindly indulgence, in which the real aim of the empire and the conditions of its strength retreat out of sight. The patrimony was theirs of right, to deal with as they liked, not a sacred trust. I decline to believe that the decree removing the Senate from its share in legislation was a revolution; that it startled a critical society by suddenly removing the veil of a military absolutism. It was no *coup d'état*, but a formal recognition of a state of things already existing. The Senate was lost among the nominees or the slaves of Cæsar. Even the laws were a privilege of his household. We need not be deceived into the belief that Cæsar gained by this promulgation of autocracy. An ignorant and secluded monarch only ratifies the lowest or most persuasive voice, is at the mercy of the latest speaker. It is inconceivable that Basil either desired or claimed to be solely responsible. The new form of the constitution, the temper of the age, the limited intelligence of the people, demanded a single source of authority, a unique claim to obedience. The monarchy (now become a patrimony) had to be expressed in purely monarchic terms. In procedure, in influence, in consequences, not the smallest change was to be observed. Only the terms and phrases were more frank. A monarch is either a general surrounded by his staff-corps, a president surrounded by his assessors, or a master surrounded by his slaves; for the government of *one* is either military, civilian, or of the household and patriarchal type. The jealous rivalry between the two first elements did not cease in this age; but it was held in check by a universal acknowledgment, neither servile nor hypocritical, that the emperor was absolute master in his own dominions of life and chattel. This temper it is difficult for us to realise to-day. Basil I., without effort or talent of his own, stepped into an unques-

Palace-government.

The people press the claims of undisguised Autocracy.

The people press the claims of undisguised Autocracy.

tioned heritage of absolute prerogative. It is easy to understand that a ring or a clique will in their own interests proclaim their pious adherence to autocracy. But it is not so easy to understand the sincerity of a whole people, outspoken and intolerant of wrong, bent on denying their own freedom and loading their prince with an intolerable burden and every predicate of a divine omnipotence. Yet it is useless to repeat the first axioms of liberalism and to preach a self-satisfied discourse on the servility of the Greeks. The patrimonial idea was popular; and in an age of great mildness, amid order and free speech, the populace (at least in the capital) were more jealous of their sovereign's rights than of their own. The reigns of Basil and Leo are not explicit as is the succeeding age. It is not easy to estimate the influences which guided and transformed the constitution. Obscure currents met and crossed beneath the surface, leaving grave but anonymous results. But this much we say with confidence. Not without popular and official consent did the Amorian or Armenian house settle into the comfortable enjoyment of the chief throne on earth. The secondary powers in the State (whether civil or military) saw their own advantage furthered and safeguarded by this acknowledgment of lordship. Under the pretext of the unique imperial will, personal interest could be followed. It was no individual merit or ambition which hastened this change. Under a formal absolutism the emperor ceased to be the effective ruler.

Obscure economic causes at work.

§ 3. I cannot forbear from quoting the admirable words of Finlay in this connection (ii., chap. i.): "The government of the Eastern Empire was always 'systematic and cautious. Reforms were slowly 'effected; but when the necessity was admitted, 'great changes were gradually completed. Genera-'tions, however, passed away without men noticing 'how far they had quitted the customs of their 'fathers and entered on new paths leading to very

'different habits, thoughts, and institutions. The 'reign of no one emperor, *if we except that of Leo* [*the Isaurian*], embraces a revolution in the institutions 'of the State, completed in a single generation. 'Hence it is that Byzantine history loses the in- 'terest to be derived from individual biography. It 'steps over centuries, marking rather the movement 'of generations of mankind than the acts of indi- 'vidual emperors and statesmen; and it became a 'didactic essay on political progress instead of a 'living picture of man's actions. In the days of the 'liberty of Athens, the life of each leader embraces 'the history of many revolutions, and the mind of a 'single individual seems often to guide and modify 'their course. But in the years of Constantinopolitan 'servitude emperors and people are borne slowly 'onward by a current of which we are not always 'certain that we can trace the origin or follow the 'direction."—Now such a current is set in motion by physical, economic, and social causes; not by private ambition or deliberate policy. Among these impersonal influences I am inclined to suggest (1) The replacement of the population since the plague of Constantine V. (*c.* 750): (2) the agricultural changes to be dimly descried in the legislation of the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries: (3) the changes in the Law during the same period: (4) the final settlement of the Iconoclastic controversy in the triumph of orthodoxy,—the failure of the Protestant reform-movement: (5) the undoubted influx of wealth and bullion into the Eastern realm, perhaps frightened away from the moribund empires of Charles or Harun. On each of these I shall say a few words and pass on to a tentative estimate of the several influences on the manner, the methods, and *personnel* of the government. The critic is largely left in these matters to conjecture; and the only value of the general student is to propose with diffidence certain avenues or mines of research, which may

Obscure economic causes at work.

(1) *Change in population;* or may not repay the fuller exploration of the specialist.

(1.) I cannot claim for the plague of Constantine V. the same far-reaching effects as attended the pestilence of Justinian and Procopius two centuries before; but I believe it finished the disorganisation of the past hundred and fifty years. The European provinces no longer counted in the administration. The populace was barbarous and artificial. Emperors deported or decanted at will savage or troublesome settlers without tradition into waste places. Greece (especially in its commerce and urban wealth) recovered rapidly from the desolation of the Heraclian age, without contributing to the life or control of the empire: her two most conspicuous figures are women, the Empress Irene and the widow Danielis, benefactress of Basil I. Under the Isaurians, the "Roman" Empire became entirely Asiatic; pretenders, officials, and upper classes were from Lesser Asia, or from Armenia. In Lesser Asia was gradually rising a feudal aristocracy, exercised in arms, who will one day seize and enslave the capital to a single family (1181). In spite of the security and "quiet transmission of hereditary wealth and position" which marked the Isaurian reform movement, the Byzantine population was artificial, easily shifted, and subject to rapid changes of character. The same is true of any modern capital recruited from the provinces and draining their surplus, soon to perish in the new environment: the Berliners have within forty years been almost ousted by a foreign race. But this is in a singular degree true of the capricious if prudent creation of Constantine. An old inhabitant returning after an absence of twenty years would find the *personnel* of the government, the composition of the crowd, unrecognisable. The buildings, palace and temple, convent and hippodrome, were the same; the same liturgy in the one, the same ceremonies, equally sacred and inviolable, in the other.

But Church and State were largely served by those who could found no families; who left at their demise a place vacant for any chance comer. With the rapid extinction of a former social order, the welcome extended to exceptional courage, adroitness, or servility, the pure Asiatic invasion of high places under the Isaurians,—the plague contributed both in capital and provinces to hasten the changes and transform the face of the country. In the former the effects were more sudden and more serious. (1) *Change in population;*

§ 4. It will be as well to treat here the (2) agricultural development in the eighth and ninth centuries, so far as we can form an indistinct outline from the later imperial legislation. The main features of agrarian tenure from the time of Theodosius II. and Justinian may have resembled those of most other nations. There was at the outset a broad distinction between the lordless village-community, and the seigneurial domain. The yeomen or peasants holding in something like co-parcenage tilled the former; serfs and foreigners the latter. The history of East and West alike at this period enables us to trace the gradual obliteration of distinction between the status of the freeholder and the villein. Economic circumstances combined to depress the one; Christian, legal, and humanitarian influences to improve the other. Both met in a middle lot from which the best and worst features of either were expelled. And first for (*a*) the village community.—The individual and his rights, private property, testamentary disposition, are the creation of Roman law and Roman Jurists. Like all absolute and "egalitarian" governments, the empire preferred to confront atoms and units, not corporations. And if corporations, municipal, rural, or commercial, formed a large part of Roman life, it was for the convenience of the tax-collector. The peculiar mark of the society was the combination of corporate responsibility with the fullest recognition of private interests. In the Teutonic "view of (2) *Agricultural changes.* (a) *Communal villages.*

(a) *Communal villages.*

frank pledge," in the rudimentary institutions of justice and police (for example, among the Chinese), the State depends on the family or the local community for the discovery and punishment of crime. But the Roman Empire is frankly *fiscal* in its legislation. The inhabitants, it might appear, were singularly law-abiding; and the serious business of the governor is not the maintenance of order or the redress of wrong, but the collection of the revenue. The curial system had arisen (I will not say, had been invented) to ensure the regular payment of taxes. In like manner, the village presented a certain solidarity; all were responsible for the whole, and each for all. To-day, the loss in rating on an unoccupied house is divided proportionally among the more fortunate owners. An idle farmer, unable to meet his *quotum*, would amerce his neighbours, copartners in the village estate. It has been found that every system of land-tax must be in some degree inequitable and oppressive; and a fixed sum, regulated on a cadastral survey, at the opening of an indiction, soon presses unequally and becomes out of date. The corporate or mutual responsibility is not more unfair than other methods; but it caused distress, excited comment, was extended from the poor yeomen partners (*consortes*, *ὁμόκηνσοι*) of the defaulter to the neighbouring proprietors (who were not technically on the *consortium* register), and was abolished amid a genuine outburst of rejoicing. (For Basil II., true to the Lecapenian policy, "war on the rich landowner," spread the extra amount on the adjacent *private* estates; and Romanus III. finally swept away the *Ἀλληλέγγυον* about 1030, and won the same favour as Anastasius some five hundred years before, for annulling the *Χρυσάργυρον*.) As in the Russian "Mir," the community had some interest in the efficiency of each. The Roman village did not perhaps possess the right to send to Siberia a slovenly farmer or a wastrel; but it could protest against the

sale of land to the unworthy or incapable, because all were concerned in the good tillage of each several holding. So, in Western feudalism, where the lord embodies, as it were, the impersonal abstraction of the village commonwealth and concentrates its interests and duties, he controlled the transfer of land so as to ensure the union of military service and landed possession. Just as the constant payment of taxes in the eastern, so in the western empire the supply of sturdy retainers for warfare was the paramount interest. As the one aimed at filling the coffers of the State, so the other aimed at securing the person and property of the petty lord. Sales in the Roman village were forbidden, except to a fellow-member of the township, *vicanus;* strangers could not purchase; and it was only natural, if the adjoining landlords were made responsible for the township's default or defalcations, that they should claim pre-emption, as chiefly concerned in the control of the "common" estate. It may be suggested that the very means employed to depress the rich owner merely resulted in exalting him at the expense of his poorer neighbours. It is short-sighted folly to-day, as under Basil II., to seek to relieve the poor by taxing the rich. The wealthy have ample means of recouping or indemnifying themselves for such loss; and all taxation in the end presses upon the lower classes. Its pressure has been with justice compared to a stone bounding downstairs and reposing its whole weight upon the floor below; and to curtail the luxuries of the rich is often to extinguish the livelihood of the poor. Under cover of their responsibilities and with much show of justice, the landowners interfered in the concerns of the village and the disposal of property there. The independence of the yeoman-community was threatened; the proprietor obtained a footing inside the communal circle, and must have gradually secured the chief influence. The State, in the West, by abandoning or forgetting

(a) *Communal villages.*

Encroachment of the Magnate.

Encroachment of the Magnate.

its functions, drove the poor man into the patronage of the nearest squire; a voluntary "commendation" bargained away the liberty of thousands. In the East, the State, in its very praiseworthy concern and parental anxiety for the weaker, directly hastened the extinction of the freeholder.

(2, b) *Private estates.*

§ 5. In (*b*) the private estates (ἰδιόστατα), the owner might be a monastery or a church (as in Turkey the mosques, or our own glebes and estates of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners); the "Crown" (as the Duchy of Lancaster); or individuals. The tenantry who tilled the land were divided exactly as in a Western manor into the *freeholders* and the *villeins*. The former (*liberi* coloni, μισθωτοὶ) paid rent in kind or coin, and at the end of thirty years could not be removed from the soil they had cultivated for a generation. It is easy to see how this privilege or shield against arbitrary notice became later a sign of bondage, when the serf's lot was raised and the free tenant was depressed to meet him. We may suppose that in the most favourable time, their condition differed little from the freeholder (*liberi tenentes*) in a modern manor, or a tenant of a Scottish estate under feu-duties. The free-rent (otherwise high- or chief-rent) being paid, possession of the estate and the right of transmission on the same terms were guaranteed. One difference there might be: the free-rents of a manor in England are fixed according to the value of money seven centuries back, and bear no imaginable relation to the present value of the land. We may presume that the Byzantine proprietor was not so strictly tied by the "dead hand."—The (2) villeins or serfs (ἐναπόγραφοι, *adscripticii*) correspond to our copyholder, taken in to work an estate, housed and fed, like the inmate of the earlier Roman barracoons (the rural *ergastula*). These, too (and for a doubtful motive), are "bound to the soil,"—whether to secure their tenure or to safeguard the master against

desertion (δρατεία), it is hard to say. Technically freemen, they seem to have at first enjoyed this immunity as a unique right—which became afterwards (like curial privilege) an intolerable bondage. But in civilised societies the indigent citizen is always worse off, because of less value, than the slave (as Abolitionists have discovered): as the humble and honest ratepayer out of work is worse off than the criminal in his prison, the unemployable in his workhouse. The status of the two tended to become identical. Justinian (xi. 48, 21) professes himself puzzled to discover a distinction. The personal slave was raised to the condition of the predial serf of later villeinage, the prototype of the copyholder to-day, as yet on land unenfranchised, and subject, not to the fixed or nominal relief of the freeholder, but to the "fine arbitrary" of lord and steward. Yet however much Christian notions of equality, or Juristic and Stoical views of equity, may have had influence, the chief motive (here as elsewhere in human improvement) was fiscal. The government wished to be able to put its hand on a subject at will and with certainty. There was to be no evasion of duties once incurred, leaving a status once entered, changing a career once chosen. Everything was done to stereotype and formulate. A man took up his father's profession, with his estate, patronymic, and duties. The peasant was encouraged no less than the curial to consider his cabin and holding his own. While the emperors transported whole colonies and altered the dialect of an entire district, the spirit of the Roman government kept the classes in duress, and the peasant "nailed to the sod."

(2, b) *Private estates.*

§ 6. The first sign of altered conditions is met in the Νόμος Γεωργικός of Leo III. And it must be remembered that this reign (717–740) was the first breathing-space since the fall of Maurice. In the obscure night of the seventh century, the *thematic*

First definite reforms (c. 740) democratic in character.

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system came to birth. Whole tracts of country ceased to be imperial; and were filled with wild gipsies and settlers of various origin. The Latin law, language, and traditions were gradually superseded by local customs, barbarous, Greek, and Oriental influences. Within eighty years, an emperor proposes to make his capital in the West, and a successor surrenders Rome with indifference.

The first moments of leisure (from struggles for very life) were given to the reorganisation of the empire on Protestant lines. Leo and Constantine (whose administrative and legal edifice was complete about 750) do not merely follow the current; they also initiate, with a vigour and an individuality rare in Byzantine history. We would gladly know how far the agricultural code recognises and merely modifies an existing condition, or attempts to enforce an ideal. Did Leo abolish serfdom and its incidents, or find it gone? We have no mention of glebal bondage, no class of ἐναπόγραφοι, no freemen owing suit and honourable service to a lord. May we hazard a guess that the caste-system of hereditary *status* had been swept away in the storms of the seventh century, and given place to a new freedom of *contract?* In the class of village-communities (*a*) a new type of Socialistic "Mir" had arisen, corporations perhaps formed to take over land which had gone out of cultivation, like joint-stock companies with us. It is not difficult to suppose that this method of tenure was adopted in the Asiatic provinces gradually cleared of Saracens, and in the European parts (where imperial colonies or voluntary settlements bid fair to hold Slavs in check). For the age of Leo was no period of decay or lethargy: the religious crusades put new life and vigour into the motley assortment of races and peoples known as the "Romans"; and a general recovery, financial and economic, took place when the immediate peril of the capital was averted. On private estates (*b*) tenants

First definite reforms (c. 740) democratic in character.

are represented as free from service and bounden obligation: the rent is a matter of agreement between landlord and lessee: (1) sometimes, as in the *agri decumates* near the sources of Rhine and Danube in the first century, the μορτῖται paid a tenth of the produce; (2) at others, the landlord equipped his tenant with stock and capital, and as in the *métayer* system, diverted one-half of the profits to cover his outlay and risk; the tenant kept the remaining moiety (ἡμισείαστα). The free covenant or contract supersedes the archaic feudal tie. The Iconoclastic reform, like its "extreme Left," the Paulician movement, hated spiritual pride and hierarchic pretensions. The doctrine of equality was recognised, and a liberty of agreement on equal terms was taught and encouraged. But the individualist and democratic efforts of Leo and Constantine were not crowned with conspicuous success.

Reaction (c. 850) in interest of Church and Magnate.

§ 7. The Iconoclasts had favoured the honest yeoman and sturdy independence; but the victory of the orthodox, complete by 850, secured (so far as we may judge) the interest of the feudal and spiritual peers. An era of great families begins, reposing in the main no doubt upon hereditary skill in war, but largely also upon landed estate. While Basil I. may seem to be the occasional master of the Church, he is in reality its puppet and its pensioner. Reaction had set in; the tenants' advantage was overlooked, and the obscure legislation shows some resemblance to our own Agricultural Rating Bill, whereby a certain relief is given to the parson and the proprietor. Once again, free contract was abolished; and tenants chained to their allotted place, as once the old curials to their order. The landlords complained that the modest rental of one-tenth was insufficient; and within our own memory, estates of heavy land have been left derelict because unable to bear even the first charge of the tithe. Taxes had increased under the "Isaurians," and no doubt bore most heavily on the

Reaction (c. 850) in interest of Church and Magnate.

opulent. It was now their turn: they not only relieved themselves, under an upstart and a usurper, of fiscal burdens, but they encroached on the common lands—just as in England, we trace the gradual extinction of communal rights and the exclosure of open spaces—during the time and perhaps in unconscious revenge of the movement towards a barren political equality (1760–1832). The Byzantine noble perhaps could show better right; he had absorbed the neighbouring village-lands, by purchase (in right of pre-emption), by loan, mortgage, or advance, in all the well-known methods by which smaller holdings are merged into the great estate, like streams in the ocean. In spite of imperial favour, the free element in the rural population had well-nigh disappeared—the yeomen, whose place can "never be supplied." The tenth century is the epoch of feudal aggression and of ineffective attempts to stem the tide. The *latifundia* (whether in the age of Pliny, or of Romanus and Basil, or to-day) imply a decreasing and lethargic population, economic mischief, ruined agriculture, and a reversal to an archaic and less civilised form of society. These overgrown estates, studded with the now ruined homesteads of the small occupier, imply another danger,—the decay of the recruiting-ground of the Army. The recuperative power displayed so often and in so surprising a manner by the Eastern empire is due to the new military system, which in the crusading era (620–730) supplanted the foreign mercenaries of Justinian's age. The Byzantine army became the most national, the best equipped, the most perfectly disciplined in the world. The emperors took part in their parade and exercises in time of peace, and shared their perils and hardships in the annual campaign. So careful was the general staff of the lives of its soldiers that taunts have ever since been levelled at their cowardly and defensive tactics. Their pay was secured, and they

Soldiers' fiefs absorbed.

were supported by allotments. These were supposed to be inalienable; but in some way not very clear to the historian, nobles and grandees (*οἱ δυνατοί*) who had formed a dangerous and unpatriotic element under Justin and Maurice (565–602) absorbed these farms, whether by mortgage or secret transfer. Heraclius had once told the semi-feudal levies of Priscus[1] that they were now soldiers of the State, not the men-at-arms of a powerful citizen; the reverse was now the case. We may suspect that in an age when a Chamberlain of the Court could arm 3000 domestics and secure for his nominee the throne he could not occupy himself (963), retired or still active soldiers in the provinces would feel under especial obligations to the wealthy general in the castles of Paphlagonia or Cappadocia.

Soldiers' fiefs absorbed.

§ 8. About this time, that is, under Leo VI., a law was repealed, useful in intent, but now out of date and for long a dead letter. Under the earlier empire, it was generally understood that a provincial governor should not cement alliance or acquire property within the sphere of his duties. The soldier and the bureaucrat were members of two detached corporations, which were sedulously kept apart from the ordinary interests of the citizen and the taxpayer. Under Justinian (*c.* 530), the high official was directly forbidden to buy landed property at all: the emperor looked with suspicion on the sympathy of classes, the *concordia ordinum*, and desired to make his soldiers and functionaries as unconcerned and aloof as the ministers of the Church. But in East and West alike a tendency set in which obliged wealth to find the only outlet for capital in landed estate, and firmly united power and influence with territorial possession. The peculiar circumstances of the empire (to which history offers no precise parallel) might have betrayed to Leo the Wise the im-

Estates of officials: struggle against encroachment of grandees.

[1] Niceph. (*de Boor*, p. 6): vol. i. 282, ii. 84.

Estates of officials: struggle against encroachment of grandees.

prudence of removing the prohibition. In spite of intermittent methods of autocracy, the sovereign was nearly sinking into the puppet of noble factions, the Venetian Doge, or the British monarch in the time of the Georges. But the *major domus* became himself the emperor, and was *plus royaliste que le roi.* The legislation of the hundred years following the accession of Lecapenus shows the determined efforts of the State to shake off feudalism and its incidents. The Novels of Romanus I. (922), of his son-in-law, Constantine VII., 947; Romanus II., 963; Nicephorus II., 964, 967 (3); Basil II., 988, 996 (2), have a single aim, to prevent the absorption of the small owners and the dangerous destitution of a trained soldiery. To the lasting credit of the Byzantine government, these soldiers never became a menace to the public peace, never dissolved into roving bands, more dangerous to friend than to foe. But this excellent discipline was secured by fixed and regular pay and a certain home-pension for old age. In the recovered provinces the chief beneficiaries were the court-officials: the story of John Zimisces' complaint and death is one of the best-known incidents of this period, and is perhaps even more valuable as evidence, if it be but a legend. It betrays another problem of conflicting aims and interests, which would one day tear the State apart (*quandoque distrahant Rempublicam*, Tac. *Ann.* i. 4) and open the way for the barbarian.

Attempt to restrict Monastic property (c. 965).

§ 9. In another direction, the victory of the Orthodox was attended with mischievous results. The fundamental difference of Eastern and Western monachism is well known. Under the Merovingians (especially in the last century of their nominal rule) convenience no less than pious respect granted extensive rights to prelates and abbeys. The tenants of a monastery were better off than the serfs of the secular neighbour; and the corporation (like a college to-day) was a popular landlord. It is needless to repeat the

praise deservedly bestowed on these early foundations, custodians of the remnants of arts, letters, and civilisation, and sole pioneers in the improvement or reclaiming of waste land. Such does not appear to have been the experience of the Eastern empire. The "immaterial" life, "equal to the angels," was here less practical and operative. The government in Eastern countries is despotic, largely because the only class able to create or guide public opinion is otherwise engaged, in meditation, divine studies, or preparation for death. Now it would be unfair to depreciate the part played by the Greek Church in the political sphere, according to its lights. I cannot detect the grovelling servility of which it is constantly accused. The instances of a frank and conscientious opposition to the Court are at least as frequent. No one would deny that it provided a valuable counterpoise to that secular centralism which is the goal and bane of modern States. The tyranny of a government (such as some fondly dream of as an ideal), in which all the resources of science and administrative machine are directed relentlessly to the fulfilment of worldly ends,—would prove unbearable. I have elsewhere noted that the gravest problem of future politicians will lie not in the academic inquiry, "Where is sovereignty enthroned?" but "Where is the counterpoise to its now unlimited power?" The Greek Church performed its duty with courage. It never became wholly secularised or a portion for cadets. Theophylact (whom in the text I have compared to John XII.) is an almost unique instance of the common Western type,—the hunting prelate, more at home in the stable than the church. Imperial influence and caprice may choose the patriarch; but there are no Marozias or Counts of Tusculum.—It is impossible always to sympathise with the Church, even while we concede the value of its frankness. Piety, which in the West was preserving the rudiments of culture and social life,

Attempt to restrict Monastic property (c. 965).

Attempt to restrict Monastic property (c. 965).

well-nigh ruined the empire in the East. The Iconoclasts struggled for the very existence of the secular State. The lavish gifts to monasteries, the building of new houses, had not the same practical value as in the West. Such property was lost to the State. It might and did become a house of idleness, a scene of desolation, rather than a smiling oasis in the wilderness of secular properties. All governments have at one time or another been obliged to confiscate existing Church revenues, or limit carefully the right of bequeathal. Charles Martel had in France an aim similar to his Eastern contemporaries, Leo III. and Constantine V. The Novels of Nicephorus, a century later, betray the same anxiety to limit the revenues of ecclesiastical establishments, while warmly commending the erection of new foundations in waste districts. A passion for the monastic and celibate life was depopulating; and the government had to strive against other causes than that of war or pestilence in the maintenance of the census. Nicephorus himself is the last person to be justly accused of hatred of monks. So far from being a *mangeur des moines*, he was in sympathy with their life and aims. He himself helped to build several houses on Mount Athos; and his daily prayers and ascetic practice estranged his wife, his friends, and that fickle and luxurious populace in the capital, who looked for other qualities in an emperor than prowess and sanctity, who while professing reverence for the monkish habit and ideal, preferred to perform their own devotions by proxy.

B. The Government and the Landed Interest

Economic fallacies of Byzantium; Bullionism.

§ 10. The government, then, during this period (850–1000), whatever the personal predilection of individual rulers, sought consistently to curtail large accumulations in private hands or in ecclesiastical

corporations. But human nature and economic conditions were against them. Two fatal misconceptions spoilt the beneficence of the imperial system from the outset: (1) The belief that the government could only be strong and secure by keeping individuals poor, by setting watch, like some jealous dragon of fairy-tale or mythology, over vast treasures of unused bullion; (2) that the sole wealth of a country lies in the land—we are familiar with this latter fallacy to-day. Advance of money for commercial enterprise was dangerous and uncertain; legislation seems to have been invariably on the side of the borrower. There was no credit-system; and trade fell into foreign hands, as in Turkey, and largely in Russia at the present day. The unique outlet and opportunity for capital lay in the purchase of more landed property; and when this investment had turned out profitably, in the purchase of still more.[1] On their part, the indigent neighbours of a successful landlord had no resource but to mortgage or dispose outright in the bad harvest, the fiscal urgency, or the

Economic fallacies of Byzantium; Bullionism.

Land, unique investment for capital.

[1] One curious outlet for capital must be mentioned, by which a valuable reversion or immediate dignity and salary were purchased from the State. It is the practice of the more temperate despotisms to sell office, partly, no doubt, to enlist as large a number of supporters as possible for the existing régime, partly to replenish a deficit in the Treasury. The practice was long continued and defended under the short-lived but glorious centralised autocracy of the French Bourbons: the purchase of function and nobility was one among many means adopted to render harmless the privilege of the noble. The details of such offers among the Byzantines are peculiar and attractive as investments: the dignity of *protospathaire* and a salary of 10 per cent. could be obtained by a single capital payment. Other sinecures, providing both title, precedence, and income (like the lordship of a manor) produced about a quarter of this emolument, but could be sold and bequeathed. The residents of the capital, to whom such tempting offers were open and perhaps (as Bury suggests) confined, would have every interest in preserving the Constitution, which with land gave the only secure return on capital outlay. There was discontent and conspiracy and personal hatred in Byzantine society; there were no disaffected classes, there were no political reformers; the utmost Radicalism (to except a possible socialistic movement under Michael II.) was the removal of an individual who failed to fulfil his part, in a scheme which all considered ideally perfect and final.

Land, unique investment for capital.

personal failure. Jews, growing at this time throughout the world supreme in trade, do not appear to have turned their attention to the pledging of landed estate; it is probable that they were prevented by custom, prejudice, or direct legislation. Thus piety, economic conditions, or fallacies, and the natural (as well as spiritual) law, "*to him who hath shall be given*," combined to stultify a consistent policy.

Lecapenus (c. 930) and the landed gentry: Nicephorus (c. 965).

§ 11. Lecapenus forbids further purchase by magnates from the poor, unless they are related; and permits a valid and unquestionable title to such new acquirements only after ten years. (We may ask, whether the former owner was allowed to resume when he wished, on repayment of the sum he received for the property? for this no answer is forthcoming.) But the middle of the reign of this prince was ruinous to the small holder and the agricultural interest. In the bad seasons and distressful winters (927–932) the poor were obliged to make over their farms to their rich neighbours, to become tenants where they had been owners: it was in this way that the land of Egypt became Pharaoh's property when Joseph was premier. The yeomanry or "statesmen" rapidly diminished in numbers. The stubborn resistance offered by grandee and churchman to the interference of government was neither purely selfish nor unpatriotic. The noble could find no other safe investment; the churchman conscientiously believed that no hindrance should be put to the gifts of the faithful. It is the expedient of the puzzled historian to impute events to self-seeking; but man is more often an idealist and (unconsciously) an "altruist" than the economist or the theologian is ready to allow. In the end, the great Asiatic estates and the feudal conditions they produced, led to the downfall of the "Roman commonwealth" and the creation of a new State. But the landed gentry had no deliberate design of upsetting the old order; and the churchman was only concerned in recovering from the

sacrilegious the money left to God and his poor; in assuring independence for the Church in its appointments, and for the pious laity freedom of donation or bequest. Nicephorus, half-monk, incurred the displeasure of the Church by his attempt to secure control of Church affairs; John, his assassin, purchased immunity for the act by resigning all such claim; Basil II., unable to struggle against the current, restores the right to accept and hold property. We are amused at Luitprand's righteous indignation at the episcopal "annates" which Nicephorus exacted from the Bishop of Leucara. But such an instance supplies us with another warning against a hasty dismissal of human motive as selfish. The Church fought with a good conscience and a firm resolve in the defence of its rights. The emperors, whether Leo III. or Nicephorus, or Otto I. or Henry V., were equally clear in their own course. The feudal noble who set at naught all higher control, and wished to be undisputed sovereign in his manor or barony, was in the same way justified. Even the astute and pacific chamberlains who in later times starved the army and spent the taxes in State pageants and popular amusements, believed they were doing the State good service, in repressing the aggressive and warlike class, in securing civilian supremacy, and in warding off the perils of disorder and military law. All were right in a measure, yet all were wrong.

Lecapenus (c. 930) and the landed gentry: Nicephorus (c. 965).

§ 12. We come now to the changes in the statute-book, to the comparison of the new Codes or revision of the Iconoclast and Basilian dynasties, to the lessons derived from the final triumph of the spirit and text of Justinian. Roman Law, individualist and contractual, grew up in the decay of national distinction and of religious faith. It replaced the sanctions of a citizen-State and a narrow ancestral religion by a wider outlook, in which the law of nature held sway, the enemy of custom, privilege, and

(3) *Legislation of 'Isaurians' against Plutocracy.*

(3) *Legislation of 'Isaurians' against Plutocracy.*

exclusiveness. It was a fitting counterpart to an imperial system, which for the first time upset the barriers of race and creed. It was "humanitarian"; and where it was not contractual, it was tinged with emotion and sympathy. Its severest penalties were reserved for the plotter against the universal peace; that is, treason against the emperor its embodiment. Nor need we feel astonishment that the system which most completely subordinated the individual should have been the first to insist on his rights, his original liberty and equality. For it was by the free choice of the people and in virtue of their express mandate that the emperor ruled, fought, administered, and legislated. The words of Justinian are no empty boast or hypocritical subterfuge; the emperor and his law stand for freedom: "*Pro libertate quam et fovere et tueri Romanis legibus et præcipuè nostro Numini peculiare est.*" It tended to represent every relation of life as the result of free covenant and convention; and under it slavery and the *patria potestas* receive the most serious modification. The age of Justinian did not originate it; and the sovereign merely gathered up the parts into a kind of working coherence. His code shows scanty traces of Christian influence; and it is reserved for the Unitarian Leo to endeavour to give expression to the tenets of the Gospel in the administration of justice, and the conception of status, of covenant, and of crime. Edited in a foreign language which became rapidly unintelligible, the work of Justinian was partially translated and in time everywhere forgotten or misapplied. The century between the author's death and the western visit of Constans III. witnessed a great upheaval in every part of the realm. The invading Slavs brought with them their primitive habits; and in the distress of Asia Minor and the overthrow of the old civil order, local and customary law superseded the catholic enactments of the Code; while Christian practice and ecclesiastical canons

gave guidance in default of any other. By 740, when the joint-emperors produced their Ἐκλογή, the official world, having respite from danger, enjoyed a welcome leisure for considering its heritage. On all sides, institutions were in ruins; only memories and traditions survived. The new order endeavoured to combine existing practice, largely Christian or canonist, with the almost obsolete text-books. The *Ecloga* shows the dangers of the sea, the widespread influence of Christian principles, the presence of alien elements in the population: it sought to reconcile *civil* and *canon* law. The levelling spirit of Presbyterian Iconoclasm is detected in the abolition of scales of penalty, determined by the station and property of the culprit. The plutocratic basis of old Roman society disappears, at least in theory, and all are equal before the law. The *Ecloga* was then a token of a democratic reform.

(3) *Legislation of 'Isaurians' against Plutocracy.*

§ 13. The treatment of the wealthy is the chief problem which faces the ancient and the modern commonwealth. The Athenian democracy ostracised, intimidated, and perhaps finally destroyed an independent class by the various methods of the "super-tax." An Oriental monarchy encourages the accumulation of wealth by officials and private persons alike, that the inevitable forfeiture may be a rich prize, that the government may without ill-feeling gather in ill-gotten gains, and even with a show of justice confiscate the estate of the oppressor. The modern State has at present no settled policy. But it regards the capitalist with increasing suspicion and dislike. Though it would resent the comparison, it desires to become, like the Eastern potentate, the heir of his wealth. But to his initiative, his enterprise, his business methods, it cannot succeed of right; and it is too early to decide the vexed question whether the impersonal control of bureaucratic government is as effective as that of a single interested manager. The State (it would

Problems of State and Capital.

Problems of State and Capital.

appear to-day) believes its duty to consist in the grudging protection of wealth by general order and police, that it may penalise any lucky turn, may seize upon the growing spoils, and find new ways of relieving the adventurous or the fortunate of their surplus. This is not the best education for those who profess to be the rightful heirs of these enterprises and industries. One would hesitate to entrust the practical management of a "going concern" to those who had hitherto contented themselves with exacting "arbitrary fines." Now the Roman Empire, perhaps the wisest of political institutions, had conferred on wealth a recognised place of dignity, while by giving publicity and prestige it had curtailed its mischievous and indirect influence :—for in a modern State the outlets are many for secret manipulation by a powerful class or indeed corporation, suffering, as they suppose, from unjust treatment. The rich were installed in a monopoly of municipal power. The poorer classes were committed to their care and kindly supervision, and taught to look to them for the support of religious festivals, corporate banquets, and the public amusements, which formed the chief business (I will not say, distraction) of urban life. If the wealthy had obvious privileges, they had heavy duties. They had the burden, but not the direction, of affairs. The civil service and the army were recruited from the needy and ambitious. The supreme place seldom lay within the timid grasp of the rich noble ; the Gordian family (238–244) is perhaps the only instance where high birth and fastidious luxury are raised to the purple. Yet on the whole this division of labour succeeded. Certainly the classes in their urban centres lived together on amicable terms ; the dangers and disabilities of opulence were too conspicuous for envy. The curial system exposed the perils of the smaller owners ; and the strangely detached order of Senators (who had never perhaps visited the metropolis or sat

The rich kept aloof from affairs under earlier empire.

in the Curia) was without defence against a prefect faced with a deficit. The reigns, for example, of Valentinian I., †375, and of Justinian, †565, are marked by merciless official raids against private wealth, of which, perhaps, the emperor himself was culpably ignorant, if not an accomplice. Natural causes and public calamities extinguished the opulent class during the seventh century. When the Iconoclasts began to renew and to reconstruct society, the Church and the official class were alone visible; and below, at an immense interval, were the alien factors and elements fermenting in obscurity.

The rich kept aloof from affairs under earlier empire.

§ 14. Religious prejudice combined with social changes to nullify the legal services of the Iconoclasts. The Basilian code (complete *c.* 900) reverts to the spirit and letter of Justinian; warmly accuses the ill-advised efforts of Leo and Constantine; and in reviving the ancient and Roman text does not even take the trouble to eliminate the anachronistic clauses, which had reference to a state of society long passed away. Criminal law becomes more merciful, the death-sentence infrequent,—and we must compare with shame the Byzantine usage with the careless and savage sentences of our statute-book down to recent memory,—when "men must hang that jurymen may dine." It is suggested, not without reason, that mutilation, which largely took its place, was founded on the Scripture precept, "Cut it off and cast it from thee." The tenderness for human life, noticeable in the tactics and practice of Byzantine war, is now clearly seen in their code; and if this be a test of civilisation, at least as important as the extended suffrage or a complete system of baths and wash-houses, we are afraid that England under George III. must fall behind Russia under Elizabeth or the Eastern empire under John Comnenus. But critics remind us of occasional lapses into terrible and vindictive penalties; and are inclined to refer this respect for life to monkish

Legal reforms of 'Isaurians' repealed by 900.

Mercy in the Code.

Mercy in the Code.

superstition (right of asylum or leisure for a sinner's repentance) rather than to the truer motives of compassion or humanity. In any case, we must in fairness do justice to a notable improvement in the Roman Empire on an essential matter, at a time when the rest of the world was reverting to savagery and altogether shaking off the restraints of law, while rendering its sanctions more severe.—The two last causes contributing to the altered aspect of the reviving empire I have named (4) the settlement of the Iconoclastic controversy, and (5) influx of bullion. Both these may be briefly dismissed; for

(4) *Revival of Ecclesiastical influence.*

my conviction of their serious import is unhappily independent of any detailed proof. In the eighth century, at least under the two first "Isaurians," the State, embodied in a masterful personality, was all-powerful. The official hierarchy were reduced to their true status as obedient servants; justice was enforced without respect of persons; and the rivalry of the Church as an independent order in the State was curtailed. The views of Leo, in the preface to his *Ecloga*, somewhat resemble the doctrine of Dante's *De Monarchiâ*. The heavenly calling, the theological and religious responsibilities of the emperor are clearly recognised. He claims to be above the monkish orders, not because his aim is secular, but because he is the chief earthly representative of a theocracy. With the settlement of the conflict, by Irene for a time and finally by Theodora, the Church won back much of its direct and indirect influence. It again became a political, social, and territorial force, which claimed independence of control in other realms besides that of preaching and theology. We may here repeat, that a unitary State-government, without counterpoise, must be a necessary if perilous expedient in time of crisis or dissolution, or among peoples just learning the rudiments of political compromise. But in a highly complex and civilised

society, in a nation scattered over a wide tract of country and exposed to the errors and inadequacy of centralised administration, the make-weight of independent classes on the land, or in commerce, or in letters, or in spiritual affairs, is essential to a wholesome equilibrium. Let any unhistoric idealist learn from the Roman Empire the evils of government interference and monopoly, however conscientious and well-intentioned. The danger of a republic is not anarchy or even class-warfare (though this most commonly follows any loud announcement of the actual equality), but a conservative stagnation, the decay of charity, fellow-feeling, and lofty aim, a cynical indifference to official corruption, and a unique preoccupation to obtain a place under government. But in the most centralised period of Byzantine rule, the Church interfered with this unitary conception of the State and its duties; set apart a class of men who, living the "immaterial" life of bare need, could not be touched by a government of force; watched over the orthodoxy of the sovereign and rebuked the errors of princes. It is a pity that in recovering this independence and noble frankness, the Church became entangled in worldly concerns. The endowment of new monastic foundations proved, as we have seen, the impoverishment of the country, and implied the disappearance of the yeoman-farmer. (4) *Revival of Ecclesiastical influence.*

(5) The fact of the economic revival of the empire is undoubted; but it belongs to the specialist to search for the causes and to trace the development. The vast treasures left by Theophilus and by Theodora, or squandered by Michael III. and Constantine IX., seem incredible. But the whole period from the accession of Leo III. to the death of Constantine X. is marked by a steady recovery, by an accumulation of bullion in the only kingdom which seemed to provide security. Bury well points out the fair distribution of wealth in the capital under the (5) *Revival of private wealth.*

(5) *Revival of private wealth.*

Isaurians; the later increase of riches was to the advantage of those already well-to-do. Money seeks its like, and while the government hoarded in default of true economic insight, the rich proprietors eluded taxation (as in any other feudal society) and raised up, under a nominal autocracy, an oligarchy of families, which I might term with Lord Beaconsfield "Venetian," were it not on closer inspection almost wholly military.

C. The Sovereign and the Governing Class under Michael III.

Family of Theodora the Armenian.

§ 15. The marriage of Theophilus has been embellished by legend, but it was an event of capital importance to the empire. One Armenian family had a monopoly of office and captaincy for perhaps thirty-six years, only to be succeeded by another. We read with surprise the boasts of the ancestry of Basil or of Theophobus; to believe myth or the complacent Herald's College of Constantinople, the latter was a *Sassanid*, and on the salutation of the 30,000 Persian troops at Sinope, revived for a moment a legitimate Persian monarchy (ὡς ἐκ τούτου καὶ τὰ Περσῶν καινίζεσθαι ἔθιμα); the former, more lucky in his fate, traced descent from the rival family of *Arsacids*. But the house of Theodora represented an *Armenian* origin, and had settled or obtained a post in Paphlagonia. At this time, the great Armenian race, preserved (or even reviving) in the wreck of the Persian empire and maintained in mountainous fastness against the Caliphate, threw themselves into the arms of Rome. Henceforth the fortunes of our empire are inextricably interwoven with the remoter East; and fall before the Seljuks just 200 years later, because the vigilant frontier-defence of the Armenians had been abandoned, together with their independence. The noble family of the Mamigonians turned to the empire, and gave

up their estates for the more lucrative service of the Amorian dynasty. Theoph. Contin. (who is under no courtly obligation to flatter a long extinct house under Constantine VII.) calls Marinus, the father of Theodora, *οὐκ ἄσημός τις ἦ ἰδιώτης τὴν τυχήν*.[1] Manuel, his brother, was brought from his retreat by the emperor's express orders to take part in the Saracen war. He appears still to have held the titular office of Commander of the Guards, which his nephew and lieutenant Antigonus really exercised; and legend insists that he preserved the life of Michael, just as his earlier namesake twice saved Theophilus. This uncle, Manuel, was a capable general, and is very generally confused with an earlier Manuel, also an Armenian,[2] who had served the unfortunate Michael I. with fidelity (813) and had proved the mainstay of the forces and the shield of Leo, and of Theophilus, at cost of his own life. Theodora, born at the unknown town of Ebissa in Paphlagonia, brought her family into still greater prominence. And herein we notice the curiously consistent "democracy" of the empire in all its seven ages as opposed to the aristocratic and exclusive basis of later European society. Any one may enter the service of Cæsar, even Moabites and Hagarenes; any one may become Cæsar; to the chief place in the mighty fabric the gates, like those of Dis, stand wide open day and night. We are not surprised to find the son of a just vanquished Saracen governor heading an imperial detachment in Tzimisces' Russian war, and killing one of the three leaders. The earlier Manuel crosses to and fro between the service of the Caliph and Theophilus; the one dismisses him with tears, the other welcomes the traitor (and possibly the renegade), and

Family of Theodora the Armenian.

Emperors always wed subjects.

[1] He held the somewhat indistinct office of *δρουγγάριος*, or, as some aver, *τουρμάρχης*, cont. Thph. 55.

[2] Cont. Thph., *ἐκ τῶν Ἀρμενίων καταγόμενος*. According to Genesius, he spread over the East the repute of a valiant and dreaded warrior (93).

Emperors always wed subjects.

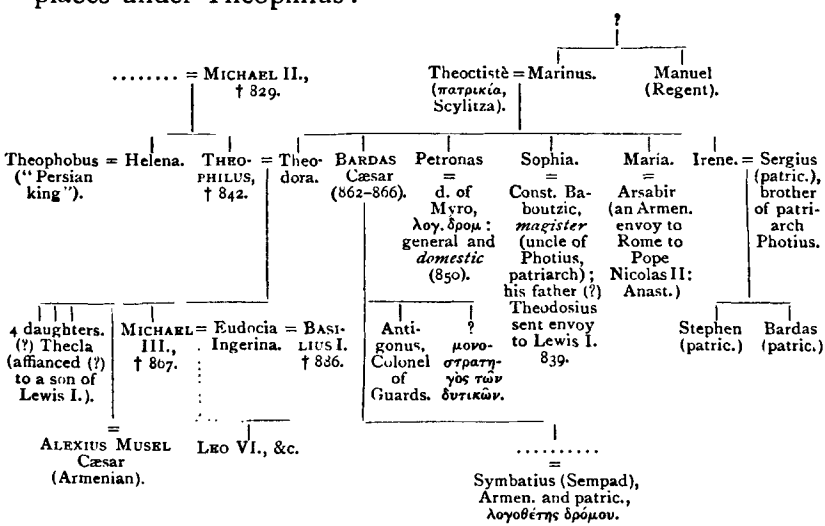
at once gives him the honorary title of *magister* and the serious duty of *domestic of the school.*— But in one particular, Roman tradition, so generous to capitulation and appeal, maintains a pride alien to the rest of its institutions. "No foreign matches for the imperial house," was a principle rarely departed from: "Let the emperors mate with subjects." A daughter of Theophilus was proposed for a son of Lewis the Debonnair; but nothing came of the betrothal, and Thecla sought some consolation in transient amours. In the next century, Constantine VII. hands down among the curiously assorted "*arcana imperii*" a solemn prohibition of a strange alliance for royal princesses. He dismissed the marriage of Emperor Christopher's daughter to a Bulgarian, with the true remark that he did not strictly belong to a reigning house. Constantine V. may well have shocked public feeling by his union with a Khazar; and, excepting Justinian V., we must revert to Gallienus before we meet an alliance with a barbarian, of deliberate policy. In this age, and still later in the feudal period, the empire stood outside that network of powerful families in the West, which in its close and baffling affinities divided the fortunes and settled the future of Europe. It may be true that wars to-day are not fought for dynastic motives, and the personal policy of Queen Victoria shows that a clear-sighted sovereign will postpone family to national interest. But the public attention centres on this union of first families, watches intently the course of the love-match or political alliance, and sees in the common children of nations, differing in character, creed, and aims, one of the firmest guarantees for peace and easy relations. From this wider and indirect influence the emperors were debarred, partly by circumstance and the inexorable veto of religious faith; partly by that strong public opinion or official rule which so completely circumscribed their fancied autocracy.

It is idle to speculate on the effect of a system of alliances with distant but reverential princes in the West. When an empty title could so powerfully appeal to Clovis in the fifth, to a Venetian doge in the ninth century, what might not have been the harmonious union of related Christendom against Islam? It is sufficient for us that it was not so, and that, at least to the end of our period, the emperors seek wives and sons-in-law in the household of subjects, refuse their princesses even to friendly and Christian potentates, and bury in the convent those who might have been bearers of civilisation and piety.[1]

Emperors always wed subjects.

§ 16. This was the family which obtained the chief places under Theophilus:—

The Regency:


?
..... = Michael II., † 829.
Theoctistè (πατρικία, Scylitza).
= Marinus.
Manuel (Regent).
Theophobus ("Persian king").
Helena.
Theophilus, † 842.
= Theodora.
Bardas Cæsar (862–866).
Petronas = d. of Myro, λογ. δρομ: general and *domestic* (850).
Sophia. = Const. Baboutzic, *magister* (uncle of Photius, patriarch); his father (?) Theodosius sent envoy to Lewis I. 839.
Maria. = Arsabir (an Armen. envoy to Rome to Pope Nicolas II: Anast.)
Irene. = Sergius (patric.), brother of patriarch Photius.
4 daughters. (?) Thecla (affianced (?) to a son of Lewis I.).
Michael III., † 867.
= Eudocia Ingerina.
= Basilius I. † 886.
Antigonus, Colonel of Guards.
? μονοστρατηγὸς τῶν δυτικῶν.
Stephen (patric.)
Bardas (patric.)
= Alexius Musel Cæsar (Armenian).
Leo VI., &c.
.....
= Symbatius (Sempad), Armen. and patric., λογοθέτης δρόμου.

Manuel secures his great-nephew's throne by refusing the title of emperor; and recalling soldiers and people in the circus to their allegiance to an infant. (Had the Armenians introduced greater respect for these rights than prevailed before?) But the first

[1] It is without surprise that we read of the doubts on the marriage of Otto II. and Theophano: yet could it be seriously believed, or indeed boasted, that the empress of the West was a Byzantine changeling?

The Regency: place in the Council of Regency after Theophilus' death was held by a eunuch-chamberlain and patrician (this title is sown broadcast and ceases to bear any distinctive meaning). Theoctistus (who may possibly have been connected with Theodora's mother) had been λογοθέτης τοῦ δρόμου, or Post-master. We may note that he was envious of a military renown, and took command in three unsuccessful campaigns in 843, 844, 845. Calumny removes Manuel; Theoctistus is removed by Bardas' intrigue and by a scene of unusual violence, in which even the emperor and his uncle are disobeyed. We read of Damianus, a chamberlain, probably παρακοιμώμενος, and an evil tutor, whose advancement, pleaded by Michael III. with boyish zeal, is sternly refused by Theodora, who promotes according to old Roman tradition by merit and noble birth, not the servile and base-born. Bardas, as λογοθέτης, now wielding uncontrolled influence over his nephew, reforms his ways and governs the empire well. Theodora is induced to retire by her ungrateful son; first insisting on an inventory of the treasures she left, so soon to be squandered by him. Damianus slips from favour and is replaced by Basil, the Macedonian-Slav or Armenian, whose romantic story dominates this period. Basil is further promoted. He gave the usual largess with great splendour (ὑπάτευσε). Bardas receives the rank κουροπαλάτης, and at last is granted that of Cæsar, a title dormant for some time previous to the brief enjoyment of the dignity by Alexius Musel under the jealous Theophilus.—The private life of Michael III. and his personal character need not concern us; it were well to remember the words of the judicious Finlay. He seems to have emulated some of the earlier Cæsars, Nero, Vitellius, Commodus, in his vigorous patronage of the circus and his intemperance. He forced senators to take part in his favourite pastime; stopped the beacons because

Character of Michael III.

Character of Michael III.

they interfered with the serious business of his life; and seized with delirium, ordered at table the deaths of prominent men. It is notable, first, that his orders were rarely executed, unless they happened to agree with the wishes of the courtiers; second, that on the morrow the emperor was heartily relieved to find his commands disobeyed and expressed his gratitude. Yet while each night brought a renewal of the coarse pleasures which ruined his life, he was not wanting in spirit or valour. He would sometimes recast the edicts and question the arrangements of Bardas, with whom rested the real work of administration. He constantly appeared at the head of his troops; and we must deplore in his case, as well as in that of Constantine VI., that under a pious mother's care a youth not without promise or ability became the most unsuccessful sovereign in this age. It is difficult to trace the exact analogy, but the reign of Michael III. with the return of Orthodoxy shows a sudden moral dissolution of society, comparable to the reign of Charles II. after the overthrow of Puritanism. As a rule, the personal behaviour of the sovereign in his palace had not been of great importance; it was little known; and few Roman emperors were without striking official virtues or competence, which hid, or at least atoned for, private scandals, largely exaggerated by gossiping biographies. But the genial good-nature of Michael III. was popular: he mixed freely with all classes; visited and supped with the poorest, stood godfather to his trainers' and jockeys' children; and did not even estrange the vulgar by his utter contempt for the Church in a superstitious age. Gryllus the Pig was his mock patriarch, whose unseemly revels, mass in masquerade, and vulgar indecency towards the empress (if we may credit an idle legend), were the talk of the capital. The private unbelief of a sovereign may be without influence; but the drunken processions of Michael's

Character of Michael III.

patriarch and his choice companions were notorious. Theophilus, a man of stern and austere character, had built a hospital where once had been licensed houses of ill-fame. Society seemed (with the return of the mediating power of images) to have thrown off the fetters of restraint. Bardas lived in open concubinage with a daughter-in-law. Thecla (a sister rather of Michael III. than of Basil) surpassed the daughters of Charlemagne in the facility of her attachments. Basil himself assumed, with deep astuteness, a levity and an intemperance which were far from congenial to him; and he threw off the disguise of vice when it had served his turn. He accepts the cast-off mistress of Michael III., Eudocia Ingerina, and communicated to others his own suspicions of the parentage of Leo the Wise. It is not a little peculiar that the principle of legitimacy should have taken firm root among the Byzantines at a time when of two sovereigns one, Leo, was of doubtful origin; and the other, his own son, Constantine VII., had been born out of lawful wedlock.

Cynical enlightenment in Church and State.

§ 17. Bardas Cæsar stands out with a Caliph and a Patriarch (Almamun and Photius) as the most enlightened ruler in a dark age. He encourages justice, law, and letters: he founds a university in Magnaura and entrusts it to Leo, who had acquired notoriety in the last reign. He succeeded in supplanting the pious Ignatius as patriarch by the lay statesman Photius, great-nephew of Tarasius, a previous occupant of the see, raised with the same suddenness from the official first-secretariat (πρωτοασηκρῆτις) to the archiepiscopal throne. Photius was the son of a *spatharius*, and seems to have succeeded Basil as Chief Equerry or Master of the Horse. The ruse by which Bardas secured the acquiescence of the bishops in Ignatius' deposition has a curious significance, in view of the known relaxation of discipline, morals, and religious conviction which followed the settlement of this Iconoclastic controversy. He secretly promised

the reversion of the vacant see to each several bishop, begging him to show a decent reluctance to obey the imperial summons; and it must be confessed that their unanimous acceptance of this proposal is exceptional in the annals of the Eastern Church. Another incident of imperial and (as we must presume) of ecclesiastical policy throws light upon the sinister aspect of the time; I mean the persecution of the Paulicians. Did society compound for loose morals and the Church for self-seeking by religious intolerance? Under a government, largely dominated by Armenian influence, the frontier-vassals or sentinels of the East (countenanced since the days of Constantine V., perhaps in secret sympathy) were not merely discouraged but turned into rebels. Actively disloyal, the Paulicians sought refuge with the principal foe of the empire, the Emir of Melitenè; for example, Carbeas, whose father suffered the horrible penalty of crucifixion for his religious views. The persecution of the Cathari, of the Albigenses, had some excuse in the ignorant suspicion of the age and the anti-social character of their views and practice. But the persecution of the Paulicians must be classed with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the expulsion of Moriscoes from Spain,—a political error of serious importance.

Cynical enlightenment in Church and State.

§ 18. The reign of Michael III. in its jealousies, palace-cabals, and murders, betrays features happily uncommon in Byzantine history. Bardas, in spite of his capacity and learning, was a man without principle or moral conviction. He sought to preserve the influence of his family by retaining the chief military offices for its members, the chief civil, for its creatures. Petronas, Theodora's own brother, flogged by Theophilus with impartial but Oriental justice, is called from Ephesus, whence he governed the *Buccellarian* Theme, to the supreme command on the Saracen frontier. Did the Cæsar fear to confide forces to a stranger? Did he contem-

Murder of Cæsar Bardas.

Murder of Cæsar Bardas

plate the deposition of Michael III.? He was assassinated in the emperor's presence; and the plot was conceived and executed by the new favourite, Basil. The populace, usually indifferent to the removal of its viziers, protected a monk who publicly reproached Michael with the murder.—For a short time a genuine civil war formed an almost welcome contrast to the intrigues of the palace around the childless emperor. Basil succeeded to Bardas' vacant dignity, but Symbatius (Sembat), his partner, won no advantage from the crime. Sembat leagued with the *Obsician* governor: they raise a standard of revolt in the name of the emperor, plunder and pillage. Against the two is despatched an Armenian, Maleïnus, one of the territorial noble families, which in another line produces Nicephorus Phocas and John Tzimisces; and the revolt is crushed and its authors cruelly put to death. Michael now betrays the same jealousy of Basil as he had shown to his own uncle. With an autocratic caprice and neglect of form, infrequent in the Eastern empire, he suddenly invests Basiliskianus (or Basilicinus) with the purple buskins of a colleague at table, asking Basil whether he had not still the same prerogative that raised *him* to the rank of Cæsar? Reports do not agree as to the status and origin of the new imperial partner. He is called a rower in the imperial trireme, but he is also represented as the brother of Constantine Caballinus, prefect of the city (who seems to have borne as a genuine name the odious epithet of the son of Leo III.); he was presented to the silent and astonished senators the next day. Basil had reason to fear for his life; his murder was attempted in vain. Like Bardas he had taken a serious view of his responsibilities, as colleague of a madman; whom he had alienated by his virtues and diligence. He was neither a soldier nor a civilian,—merely a palace favourite who developed a sudden aptitude for affairs, and with all his

and of Michael III.

timely complaisance to Michael's follies, maintained a just view of the duty and dignity becoming an emperor. The death of Michael, one of the most pitiful and tragic episodes in our history, was an unhappy necessity. Both self-defence and the needs of the State might urge Basil to lose no time and to overcome all scruples. The people heard without interest or commotion of the transference of complete sovereignty to the Cæsar, and it is probable that the murder was not more public than the circumstance of Emperor Paul's assassination in 1801. If we reproach the Byzantine people at large with a callous disloyalty and indifference, we must remember the secrecy of the imperial tradition, the mystery of the palace, the discreetness of those permanent attendants and officials, to whom any change of sovereign was of slight moment. No telegraph then made known to a horrified society the minute details, as in the murder of Alexander and Draga of Servia, or the King and Crown-prince of Portugal. With all our boasted advance in humanity the nineteenth century will remain pre-eminently the Age of Regicide; singular irony, when we remember that kings were invited to lay down a burdensome prerogative that they might divert to others the invidia of bad government, and becoming sacrosanct reign secure but superfluous in the hearts of their people.

Murder of Cæsar Bardas and of Michael III.

§ 19. Thus fell the *direct* dynasty of Amorium; for it is more than probable that Leo the Wise continues the obscure lineage. It had arisen under very similar circumstances; an old friend and colleague suspected and imprisoned; a sudden massacre in the grey dawn; and a hasty salutation. Michael II. was low-born, ignorant, and unorthodox; but his family soon acquired the weakness and the culture of a long-established family. Theophilus was magnificent without losing simplicity in personal life and character; he had known the dangers and

Accession of Basil further strengthens Armenian influence.

Accession of Basil further strengthens Armenian influence.

vicissitudes of a private station. Michael III. is the true type of the young heir born in the purple. He is no nonentity like Honorius; but his upbringing has spoilt him, and he lacks the first requisite of a Roman emperor, application to business, personal contact with affairs. His reign bears a curious resemblance to that of Commodus; viziers, forced into rivalry with the emperor, do the hard work; and he enjoys high office as a means to gratify the not unmanly and still regal tastes of a sportsman. When Xiphilin was transcribing Dio Cassius and his contemporary account of Rome under the son of Aurelius, he could not fail to detect the likeness. During this nominal autocracy, the machine of government went on of its own secular momentum. The regents were able and considerate, but the treasury was exhausted by Michael's constant extravagance. This, indeed, in the eyes of his subjects, was his chief demerit. Yet may we ask, without shocking the economist, whether a reckless profusion does not circulate the precious metals more profitably than the bullionist policy which hoards the whole surplus capital of the State? Certainly at no time did the empire more ostentatiously display its marvellous capacity for recuperation. Basil found an almost empty treasury; but after twenty years he bequeathed to a dubious and suspected heir the same wealth and opportunity of enjoyment that Theodora had transmitted to Michael on retiring from the regency.—The Amorians had allied with an Armenian family as yet without permanent surname.[1] And the change of dynasty in 867, after so many sanguinary intrigues, only gave greater power to the Armenian interest. The conspirators who removed

[1] We may indeed trace the beginnings of this new practice; under Leo VI. a valiant general is styled ὁ τοῦ Φωκᾶ; Constantine VII. writes (*de Adm.*) explicitly of a certain general of the *Peloponnesian* Theme, οὗ τὸ ἐπικλὴν ὁ τῶν Βροιεννίων,—where later custom treats both Phocas and Bryennius as family names. Is not even Gibbon misled as to the meaning of the term Monomachus?

Accession of Basil further strengthens Armenian influence.

Bardas, the regicides who shed the blood of their sovereign, are undeniably Armenian. The precise origin of Basil the "Arsacid," the Slav, the Macedonian, the Armenian,—we shall never know; nor is the birth of this bold but isolated figure a serious matter. But he depended on Armenian support, and received a crown with gratitude from an Armenian sovereign! There is something strange and even startling in the Byzantine empire at this time. There is a fixed social order enjoying a security of life and property unknown elsewhere; a bureaucratic service still imbued with the administrative methods and traditions of the age of Constantine; a Church representing Hellenic culture and abstention under the cover of Christian theology and monasticism; a course of justice, at least for the ordinary man, incomparably more equitable than any that prevailed till centuries later in other countries; an army efficient and devoted, whose failures were due rather to bad leadership than want of spirit or training; and, at the apex, a strange foreign family, whether of Michael the Amorian or Basil the "Arsacid," not educated either in the church or the civil service, alien to the doctrine and letters of this "Roman" society, and yet able to seize at will by two obscure murders the most dazzling prize that earth could offer to human ambition.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOVEREIGN AND THE GOVERNMENT UNDER BASIL I., LEO VI., AND ALEXANDER (867–912)

Transfer of throne to the 'Arsacid,' 867, supported by official class.

§ 1. A PERIOD of some forty-five years is covered by the reigns of Basil and his two sons. We reserve the indecisive space of the regency which governed under the nominal rule of Constantine for the next section, before the appearance of Romanus I. and the inauguration of a new family. These are years of quiet and steady recovery, vigilant and systematic business at home and abroad, relapsing in the latter half into that short-sighted conservatism and enjoyment of resources, which seems to follow every restoration of central control in Byzantine history. There are plots, conspiracies, and intrigues; but the period cannot be termed one of anxiety or unrest. No general attempt was made or contemplated to change the family or the form of government; and we may well wonder if these emperors regarded such episodes as serious matters, so striking is the leniency shown to traitors and would-be regicides, with one remarkable exception of barbarous cruelty, which shall be noted in due course. In spite of the historical resemblance, Basil was no peasant Maximin (235), who merely excelled in bodily strength and killed a benefactor. It is true that his records are composed by those who wrote under his grandson's partial eye; but it is clear that his "usurpation" was popular and his government well supported by the official class, whose quiet but obstinate opposition had proved disastrous to more reigns than one. It seems, at the outset, abundantly clear that the mysterious Senate had moved in the matter of the

transfer of the throne. Like their ancient prototype, without executive power, perhaps without corporate privilege, the βουλή, σύγκλητος, or γερουσία exercised a certain but indefinable control. It was in the presence of this body of high officials that Theodora and Basil opened the treasury: the one at the close of her regency, to display its wealth; the other, at the first moment of his monarchy, to show its emptiness. Basil was sufficiently tactful and astute to secure their support from the first; and the abolition of a supposed privilege of legislation was certainly not the act of an absolute or capricious Cæsar, who despised a rival and insulted this last remnant of the Dyarchy. The natural and legitimate successor of an incapable prince, he was welcomed by clergy and civilians alike; and owing to some admirable secret of the Byzantine military system, no distant prefect or general hastened to the capital, like Galba or Vespasian or Constantine, to claim the vacant place by force. It is a moot question whether the general welfare of the realm suffered or gained by this exchange, when palace-intrigue replaced the military "pronunciamento." Public opinion was less shocked, no doubt; the greatest secrecy prevailed as to the interior of the palace, the veritable "Forbidden City" of the Byzantines. The technical forms were carefully preserved; even Basilicinus, the nominee of a debauch, was presented to the silent ranks of senators by the now sober Michael; and Basil, solemnly inaugurated, well tested by a year's association, succeeded without protest, receiving his crown over again from the altar, through the patriarch's hands, as a sacred trust from God.

Transfer of throne to the 'Arsacid,' 867, supported by official class.

§ 2. It would be difficult and perhaps unfair to estimate the position of this sovereign without inquiring into the administration which made his reign acceptable and his family popular. He had good ability, a natural desire for the happiness of his

Domestic reforms and foreign policy of Basil.

Domestic reforms and foreign policy of Basil.

subjects (whose lot he had known and tested in his youthful poverty), and he was well served. Nature and willing human effort combined to help him in his task. First and foremost came the reform of finance and the replenishing of the treasury; unworthy pensions were halved, not entirely abolished; even the needs of the State under an absolute prince recognised something like "vested interests." The expenses of the Court were curtailed; imposts were diminished and perhaps more carefully distributed; the cost of government was simplified; proposals to increase the scale of taxation were declined, though warmly recommended by the official class; and (best of all) the steady and equitable administration of the law was secured by payment of a fixed and regular salary to the justices. This was one of the chief boasts of the later empire, that amid the storms of a turbulent age and the rapid shipwreck of neighbouring powers, this ideal at least of ἰσονομία had been preserved; the law-books might be forgotten, but the traditions of Roman equity remained inviolate. The poor suitors, forced under any centralised government to resort to the capital, were maintained during their sojourn at the State expense; and it would be interesting to know how long this unique and thoughtful provision lasted. Basil revived the old practice of sitting as assessor or interested auditor in the Courts, to give dignity to the judges as well as to guide their decisions. He sat in Chalcè, having rebuilt a judgment-hall in the vestibule of the palace; and in the Treasury (τὸ γενικόν) he was a constant attendant in the most important branch of Byzantine administration—the assessment, apportionment, and collection of the revenue, and chiefly of the land-tax. Basil, or his wise counsellors (and an absolute monarch who dares employ and listen to such deserves the credit for their sagacity), took care to have these cadastral assessments written up clearly and in full, so that every

one might read. He encouraged appeal, protest, and grievance against the exactors,—those necessary evils in a State which employs the vexatious method of direct taxation; and when he found no cases of complaint he suspected fraud or intimidation, and wept tears of joy on discovering through trusty spies that there really was no one to complain. The law was once more codified; and this bold and systematic task, bringing an incoherent mass to order, and reacting against the brief and hated Iconoclastic redaction, was completed, and should properly be noticed, under the reign of Leo VI. The disorganisation of the *army* during Michael's sole reign has no doubt been exaggerated; but Basil introduced a new element of strength, by distributing mature soldiers among the younger recruits and by making the duties of military service somewhat more continuous. He secured the submission of the Slavs, already "completely seized" of the greater part of the Balkan peninsula; and exercising a rare discretion and reversing the precedent of Theophilus, who extinguished the autonomy of Cherson, he allowed these scattered tribes to choose their own rulers (while in the last reign such places had been, it was said, sold to the highest bidder). The chief warlike events of Basil are found in the constant and indecisive border-forays in the East, on the Cilician frontier; in the regrettable overthrow of the Paulicians under Chrysochir at Tephricè; in the naval expeditions, which with varying success protected the Roman shores from the Saracen corsairs; and in the kaleidoscopic changes in the map, the policy, and the fortunes of Southern Italy. It is on the Eastern limit that the chief interest lies, where the chief obscurity conceals. We are informed significantly enough that on the fall of Tephricè, the resolute Protestant citadel of the saints, Tarsus and its emir revived and raided the empire's land; that private enterprise, not imperial policy, founded two

Domestic reforms and foreign policy of Basil.

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new themes—Lycandus, where Melias the Armenian acted as some Anglo-Saxon pioneer of a lethargic central government; Mesopotamia, where three brothers, nobles of Armenian descent, surrendered (without doubt to resume in fee) their estates to the emperor. Greater Armenia, recruiting-ground for the soundest stock and the best warriors, was divided between several great princes, and perhaps the chief bore the honourable but unmeaning title of *Curopalat.* Yet we cannot doubt that the Eastern frontier suffered severely; large tracts were depeopled either by civil war, which made a desert of the interior and compelled the vanquished to join the Saracens, or by those fruitless expeditions in Melitenè or Cilicia, where Byzantine tradition seemed to insist that the sovereign shall appear at the head of his troops.

His family: relaxation of moral restraint.

§ 3. The *family* and *ministers* of Basil consisted of four daughters who, according to the custom of the Court and the time, followed the religious life; and four sons—Constantine, by his first marriage, who predeceased him, and appeared (as he believed) in the spirit by the clever jugglery of the Santabarene; Leo, who continued this dynasty, born of uncertain origin in September 866; Alexander, who reigned for a brief period of thirteen months, 911–912; and Stephanus, born in 870, raised at the age of sixteen to the patriarchal throne, dying in seven years of the severity of his ascetic practice, and providing a precedent for the elevation of the young Theophylact by his father Lecapenus in the next century. It is said that Basil had reason to complain of Ingerina's conduct, and that Thecla (whom Theophilus had crowned and Michael her brother indulged) continued her vagaries into the more decent, or at least more pious, atmosphere of the new reign. Basil's clemency imposed upon Nicetas, the empress's *cicisbeo*, and on Neatocomites, Thecla's paramour, the somewhat peculiar penalty of the monastic life: the former was permitted under Leo to become *œconomus*

of Saint Sophia. It can scarcely be denied that a certain secular air invaded the high places of the Church, though not to the same extent as in Rome in the following century. Princes of the blood-royal take orders; Ignatius is the son of Michael Rhangabus (811–813) and the grandson of the "Arabian" Nicephorus; Gregory, the son of Leo the Armenian, is Bishop of Ephesus; Stephen and Theophylact are the brother and the son of a reigning emperor. But the episcopate was never a mere appanage for the cadets of some powerful family; and whereas in the West the holder secularised the office, as John XII. in the tenth, and Benedict IX. in the eleventh century, in the East the mitre (powerless only over the son of Lecapenus) insensibly transformed its wearer into a spiritual person. Photius himself is a statesman and an intriguer, as well as a vindictive partisan; but he brought to the throne deep learning and capacity for practical business, not often seen in a patriarch. He compassed his restoration under Basil by a pamphlet, possibly ironical, in which he displayed the Arsacid descent of the emperor. His brother-in-law, Leo Κατακαλών, is captain of the guard; he himself had been an ambassador to the caliph; and his friend, Theodore the Santabarene (who played the imposture on the superstitious Basil), was an accomplished hypocrite, ordained to the see of Patras: which the witty Byzantines called Ἀφαντόπολις, the courtly bishop being both an intruder and an absentee. We cannot discern the motive for the plot of Photius and Santabaren against Leo after Constantine's early death, grudgingly acknowledged as sole heir. It was a curious and obscure political manœuvre, conspicuously imprudent and unsuccessful. The last days of Basil were tormented by suspicion and perhaps by remorse; he grew moody and irritable; a servant who saved his life while hunting was

Secular and imperial Patriarchs.

Secular and imperial Patriarchs.

punished with death for baring his sword before the emperor, and his last words warned his successor against the priestly machinations which had embittered the closing years of his life. At this critical moment he complained, like Justin II., of the helplessness of an emperor among servants banded together to deceive him.

Byzantine public service free from conditions of nationality.

§ 4. The officials, ministers, and generals in the service of the State under Basil prove the same complete superiority to national spirit or exclusiveness, which we have so often remarked. Andrew, Governor of the Hellespont, is a Scythian of the West (in contrast to the Tauroscyths or Russians). He succeeds in one of the many expeditions against Tarsus; is superseded in a palace-cabal by Stypiôtes, a sort of later Cleon; but is again replaced and becomes Commander-in-chief. The period is chiefly worthy of notice for the emergence of those great families, mostly of Asiatic or Armenian origin, with whom arms became a hereditary profession, the defence, as distinct from the administration, of the State, a peculiar duty and privilege.[1] The great Admiral Nicetas was an effective if stern disciplinarian (not to be confounded with the chamberlain who found favour with Ingerina, nor with a courtier who assisted the return of Photius, nor again with a later confidante of Leo VI.). An indolent general in Italy, Stephen Maxentius, of the untrustworthy race of Cappadocia, gives way to Nicephorus Phôcas, grandfather of the emperor a century later. Phocas is sent against the Saracens in 886, and against the Bulgarians; he becomes

Rise of the great eastern families.

1 We read now of the first family of Ducas, which was almost blotted out in the next century, in a treasonable attempt to seize the throne. Andronicus and his son Constantine will be noticed in connection with the favourite Samonas; and we here only call attention to the gradual formation of the surname. In Basil's life (Bonn, 369) it is τὸν ἐκ τοῦ Δουκὸς; also Ἀνδρόνικος ὁ Δουκὸς υἱὸς—very soon lapsing into the brief Δουκᾶς. Dindorff in Zonaras gives δουκὸς simply as if a title. Thph. Cont. 165, ὁ τοῦ Ἀργυροῦ κ. ὁ τοῦ Δουκὸς, and of Theodotus, ὁ κατὰ τὸν Μελισσηνόν.

δομέστικος τῶν σχολῶν, or Commander-in-chief, on the demise of the "Scythian" Andrew; he refuses to become the nominal husband of the emperor's mistress, Zoe I.; and being removed to comparative exile as Governor of Lydia, achieves a brilliant victory over the Saracens, and obtains honourable mention in the "Tactic" of Leo, for a mastery of strategic art. Leo Κατακαλὼν succeeds to his European command, coupled with a palace-dignitary, Theodosius the πρωτοβεστιάριος; both are defeated with terrible loss by Symeon, throughout this reign of ease a perpetual thorn and menace,—Angyrines, the *Armenian*, being killed with his troop; and his squire Melias finding renown (as we saw) by the establishment of the *Theme* Lycandus, peopled with a colony of his fellow-countrymen. Alexius, an *Armenian* (so Constantine VII. tells us), also recovered Cyprus for the empire for seven years, after which it was again lost to the Saracens. It cannot be asserted that excessive control by the State had as yet extinguished private enterprise. Curticius, another Armenian, falls in the Bulgarian war in 889. Nicetas *Sclerus* is sent in the same year as envoy to obtain the dangerous aid of the Hungarians against the determined Symeon; and henceforward the perplexing fewness and similarity of Christian names begins to be made clear by the adoption of the surname, which serves a double purpose; the historian is enabled to trace the fortunes of families [1] and the continuity of their tradition, no longer puzzled by the sudden emergence of some isolated and unique figure, without father, without mother. We are thus enabled to judge the

Rise of the great eastern families.

[1] Another link is given by Theophylact Abastact (or the Unbearable?), who saved the Emperor Basil's life in war, and is given as the father of Lecapenus, who forty years later shared the purple with his "grandson," Constantine. In this time, too, we hear of another surname of renown; Eustathius Argyrus is the son of a general under Michael III. at Tephricè, is the representative of a *Charsian* house in Cappadocia, and becomes the ancestor of Romanus III. (1028–1034), first husband of Zoe (C. vii. 374).

Perils of divided command.

effect of the Iconoclastic revival, which enabled titles, estates, and a sense of family honour to be transmitted with a security infrequent if indeed ever found in Oriental monarchies. The most painful episode in Basil's reign is the treacherous conduct of a Leo during an Italian campaign, as the colleague of Procopius, the πρωτοβεστιάριος. This practice of joining an official of the palace with a professional soldier has been noticed before; and after all, is no novelty to the historian who remembers the astonishing success of Narses under Justinian. Not yet had the military class claimed supremacy or even independence of the civilian's administration; but we may trace in this a half-conscious suspicion of a sole command. At any rate, the usual quarrel arose between the two; Leo deserts Procopius, leaves him to perish, himself obtains a victory and returns to claim the credit. On discovery of his crime, heinous and without hope of forgiveness in the military code of honour, Leo was punished by the loss of an eye and his right hand (the same punishment which excited civilised people of late against the Moorish Sultan). Perhaps the government scarcely ventured to avenge the murder of a palace functionary by the execution of a successful captain; but other proofs are not wanting of the exceptional clemency and humane prejudices of Byzantine society at this time. Those who see in the *Greek* chronicles nothing but hideous penalties, parricide, and hypocrisy, should remember the gradual improvement in our own prison system and our penal code, and should compare the treatment of Lord Balmerino and Admiral Byng in the eighteenth century.

Abortive conspiracies against Basil and his son (870-910).

§ 5. We are brought, then, to the conspiracies and plots which disturbed the rest of Basil and Leo without rendering them cruel or vindictive. Romanus Curcuas, captain of the Ἱκανᾶτοι, was the father of a general sometime compared to Belisarius, and was the great-grandfather of an illustrious

emperor, Zimisces (†976). Sixty-six senators were implicated in an obscure plot, of which Curcuas was the author. He is deprived of sight, but his accomplices are only banished and their estates confiscated. It is permissible to see in this plot the discontent of a rich official class who had lost the chance of gain by the new methods adopted to secure their integrity. The conspiracy of Santabaren against the young prince Leo was punished on Leo's accession by the loss of sight; but it is remarked that the tender-hearted emperor repented of this sentence, recalled his old enemy to the capital, and settled a pension on him, charged on Church-revenues; this he enjoyed with the noted longevity of State pensioners, and died in the reign of Constantine VII. at an advanced age. The mild control of Leo gave the inmates of his household opportunity to show their disloyalty. Tzaoutzes Stylianus was once the governor of the three imperial princes under Basil. He had allowed his daughter Zoe to become the mistress of Leo, afterwards raised for brief space to the lawful rank of empress, and fit (if legend is to be believed) to associate with the Marchioness of Brinvilliers. Loaded with favours, dignities, and new-created titles, Stylianus conspired against Leo when absent from the capital in a villa of pleasure on the Bosporus. His son, Tautzes, captain of the guard, is in the plot, together with Basil πηκτὴς (the Harper?). Zoe discovers and thwarts the unnatural and foolish intrigue, and sends back the emperor out of harm's way to the palace. Leo contents himself with withdrawing the commission of Stylianus' son, and conferring the important post on Pardus, son of Nicolas, commander of the Foreign Legion; but it would appear that the new colonel was himself a grandson of Stylian! Basil, his brother, actually attempted to make himself emperor, and laid the foundations of the remarkable influence of Samonas the Saracen by taking him into his confidence. Samonas told Leo of

Abortive conspiracies against Basil and his son (870–910).

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the enterprise; and the kindly monarch, convinced of his guilt, burnt off his hair, and exiled him to Greece. In 902 occurred an attack on Leo during a solemn procession which bears a closer likeness to the modern dangers of royalty. A candelabrum saved the emperor's life, but he was severely wounded in the head, and the nameless and perhaps insane assassin underwent a terrible and Chinese punishment; he was tortured in vain to reveal his accomplices, and after he had lost hands and feet he was burnt alive.

Leo VI. under Stylian and Samonas: remarkable Saracen favourite.

§ 6. The personal reign of Leo is the history of a kind and ease-loving sovereign, but little acquainted with affairs, and completely under the influence of his wives and attendants. We have noticed the long predominance of Stylian, hurried through the inferior ranks of the hierarchy to the most exalted posts, master of the offices, logothete or grand treasurer, and "parent of the Emperor," *βασιλεοπάτωρ*—a title invented for the occasion by the pedantic emperor. But if the Tzaoutzes dominated over Leo, he was himself the victim of his own servants, who in every despotic State enjoy the chief influence. The greed of Musicus (Mousegh) and Stauracius precipitated the Bulgarian war by re-establishing for their private benefit a monopoly in the commerce. And after Zoe's death ("unhappy daughter of Babylon," as some one wrote on her coffin), Stylian owed his final and irrevocable disgrace to the personal discovery of the emperor; who, on a visit to the logothete's house, detected Stauracius armed with a sheaf of corrupt requests and offers. Leo, left in unaccustomed and miserable loneliness, looked round for some one to be his master. Samonas the Saracen succeeded to the Tzaoutzes as the director of the sovereign's conscience and policy. It is doubtful if his romantic and unscrupulous career can find a parallel in the annals of court favourites. Such influences may at times be paramount in a State centralised in the cabinets of the palace (like Spain after Philip II.), and inured by

native sloth or superstition to traditions of loyalty and passive obedience: Farinelli, an Italian soprano, exercised unbounded but honourable power over the melancholy Philip V. The chamberlains of Constantius II. are notorious in the pages of Ammianus. Eunuchs had governed the empire under Irene, and would again appear as the chief rulers in the reign of the aged Theodora (1054–1056), gathering in a court, as Constantine VII. wittily says, "thick as flies over a sheepfold." But in the annals of Rome there is no precise parallel to Samonas the Hagaren favourite. It is very doubtful if he formally renounced his religion: it is certain that he built monasteries at his own expense without convincing any one of the sincerity of his conversion, and that he boldly counselled his Moslem father during a visit not to accept the emperor's offer or give up Islam. He made no secret of his purpose to return ultimately to the dominions of the infidel laden with Christian spoils. Once, wearied by a tedious spell of power, he fled to Asia, and was with difficulty prevailed on to return by the emperor, grieved rather than indignant. Yet this influence over a weak monarch of an unbelieving eunuch was not resented by Byzantine society, certainly not at that time servile or hopelessly corrupt. Basil, a poor hermit, alone among the Romans, had the courage to taunt him with his race and creed, whatever the dignities by which despotism might attempt to conceal them. For fifteen years (*c.* 895–910), he was the abjectly trusted adviser and chamberlain. A singular episode is found in the adventures of the earliest Ducas in Byzantine history. Samonas had taken flight, and Constantine Ducas had been sent to bring him back. He overtook him at Cabala, near Iconium, and returned with him. Leo, anxious that his favourite should be cleared of any treasonable charge, prompted Constantine on oath to explain the sudden journey of Samonas as the result of a religious vow; he was on a pilgrimage to a shrine in

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Cappadocia. Losing his presence of mind before the stern demands of the court of inquiry, Constantine let slip the truth, that the real destination was Melitenè, where resided the chief Moslem foe of the empire. After a nominal captivity of a few months, Leo restored the chamberlain to favour, and made him godfather to the young Constantine, the long-expected heir.[1] The Saracen cherished hatred against the man who had betrayed him. His father, Andronicus Ducas, not long afterwards was invested by Leo, who knew how to choose his generals, if not his favourites, with a joint command against the Saracens. Himerius, or Homerius, logothete of the imperial port, was his colleague. The chamberlain sends secretly, warning Andronicus that the appointment was a ruse to cover his arrest; and urging instant flight to a place of safety. Andronicus believes the lie, and takes refuge with the caliph. The emperor, unable to understand the motive of this treachery, sends a message with a secret missive concealed in a candle begging him to return. Samonas tampers with the bearer, and has it delivered to the vizier; and the caliph, believing him to be a traitor to one sovereign and perhaps to both, puts the unhappy general to death. The last exploit of this alien satellite was the composition, in collaboration with other worthies of the palace, of a virulent and anonymous satire on the emperor himself. He had been piqued by the favour shown to a servant of his own by the imperial pair (910). Leo, kindly himself, and sensitive to ridicule, suffered greatly from this poisonous attack, and not less when he discovered the author. But with culpable leniency he contented himself with depriving him of office, confiscation, and imprisonment; the servant who had been the cause of the rupture took Samonas'

[1] Son of his fourth wife, Zoe II. Carbonopsina, a great-niece of Theophanes, historian and confessor, married and crowned after the birth of an heir. She succeeded the short-lived Eudocia the Phrygian in the affections of the uxorious Leo.

vacant place. Such is the whole remarkable story in brief outline—a story without parallel in the later empire. No favourite exercised so long and so inexplicable a sway over an emperor. *Leo VI. under Stylian and Samonas.*

§ 7. The chief argument against despotism is not its severity but its laxity and waywardness. Absolute rulers seldom resemble Ivan the Terrible in cruelty, Peter or Napoleon in vigilant supervision. The influences which sway the mind of a lover of ease are anonymous and irresponsible. The customary complaint of the people blames not the interference but the indifference of a ruler. We hear nothing of popular grievance or discontent under Leo the Wise, but it is easy to see that effective personal control is a thing of the past, that the nominal master has no will of his own and little voice in his own household. Where he takes the trouble to interfere, good-nature and not policy seems to direct his judgment. He vastly increased the cost and sumptuous outlay of the palace; his son remarks on the magnificence of the royal galley. *Wasteful ease of the Court (c. 900).*

Basil's simple ways were out of date in a capital bent on enjoyment. To Finlay, Leo "typifies the idle spirit of conservatism"; and he remarks, with some show of truth, that under him the "last traces of the Roman constitution were suppressed." Yet we do not chronicle in this reign the "extinction of the Roman Empire and the consolidation of Byzantine despotism." Allowing for the difference of age, society, and religious belief, Leo is but the echo of Claudius and the prototype of James I., as Basil of Maximin. He may have technically abolished the decrees of the Senate and put an end to independent municipal life. But it is hard to believe that any deliberate attack was made, under a prince so kindly and in a society so contented with its peculiar institutions, upon any genuine survival of republican or at least responsible government. It is easy to see that the spirit of the age was comfortably fatalistic, and

Wasteful ease of the Court (c. 900).

quite willing to concede to the ruler the same arbitrary power which it recognised in God, who made the harvest plentiful without man's labour.[•] Constantine VII., also a learned and an industrious man, admits the disorder which crept into the services under his father. The rules of promotion, hitherto inexorable for the lower posts up to the permanent secretariats, were disregarded. A certain "Sancho Panza" was appointed judge-admiral (*admin. imp.*, § 50), and the reports or verdicts of this illiterate man were dictated by his deputy; as a clerk prompts the decisions of the country bench, or as the sublime detachment of the nominal ministers under the Japanese Shogunate was brought down to earthly business by the whispers of assiduous valets. It is also clear that the careful supervision exercised over the collectors of revenue was relaxed; and that local exaction became again an abuse without ready redress. But it is difficult to see any great degree of corruptness in the purchase of court office; for example, a certain cleric, Ctenas, desired to become a *protospathaire*, and for the title and a yearly salary of one pound of gold offered forty. The court had become an insurance office, returning a very poor terminable annuity on a large outlay; or, as has been suggested, the State was groping its way towards the institution of a National Debt. This proposed step outside the routine of caste was unwelcome to the emperor, who seems to have found time for such minutiæ by neglect of weightier matters. But when the ambitious clerk raised his offer to sixty lbs., the imperial scruples disappeared and the patent or commission was issued; we may pardon the quiet humour of Constantine who tells the story and points out that Ctenas only lived two years to enjoy his place and salary. Round Leo collected an atmosphere of eulogy and incense; to Genesius, the earliest historian of the post-iconoclastic emperors, moderate in his praises of Basil, he is πάνσοφος and ἀείμνηστος ἄναξ, περιώνυμος and

Disregard of precedent and due promotion.

πανευκλέης and ἀοίδιμος βασιλεύς. He was undoubtedly popular; and the sole acts of his reign which can be called arbitrary are connected with his frequent nuptials and the rebukes of the patriarchs. His own irregular life did not prevent him from a moral interest in the meanest of his subjects. Like Theodora in the sixth, like Theophilus in his own century, he pulls down evil houses of resort and builds in their place an asylum for aged pensioners (γηροκομεῖον). Thph. Cont. 370 (Bonn).

Disregard of precedent and due promotion.

§ 8. With the joint salutation of "long life to Alexander and Constantine," we shall enter upon a new period; and I cannot do better than borrow from Finlay a few sentences in which this sympathetic historian contrives (rather by intuition than use of slender material) to seize the fugitive characteristics of an era of transition:—"Leo VI. had undermined the Byzantine system of administration which Leo III. had (re)modelled on the traditions of imperial Rome. He had used his absolute power to confer offices of the highest trust on court favourites notoriously incapable of performing the duties entrusted to them. The systematic rules of promotion in the service of the government; the administrative usages which were consecrated into laws; the professional education which had preserved the science of government from degenerating with the literature and language of the empire,—were for the first time habitually neglected and violated. The administration and the court were confounded in the same mass; and an emperor called the Philosopher is characterised in history for having reduced the Eastern empire to the degraded rate of an Oriental and arbitrary despotism. . . . It is difficult in the period now before us to select facts that convey a correct impression of the condition, both of the government and the people. The calamities and crimes we are compelled to mention, tend to create an opinion that the government was worse, and the

Defects and merits of the new pacific Conservatism (Finlay).

Defects and merits of the new pacific Conservatism (Finlay).

condition of the inhabitants of the empire more miserable, than was really the case. The ravages of war and the incursions of pirates wasted only a small portion of the Byzantine territory; and ample time was afforded by the long intervals of tranquillity to repair the depopulation and desolation caused by foreign enemies. The central government still retained institutions that enabled it to encounter many political storms that ruined neighbouring nations. Yet the weakness of the administration, the vices of the court and the corruptions of the people during the reigns of Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his father-in-law Romanus I., seemed to indicate a rapid decay in the strength of the empire; and they form a heterogeneous combination with the institutions which still guaranteed security for life and property to an extent unknown in every other portion of the world, whether under Christian or Mohammedan sway. The merits and defects of the Byzantine government are not found in combination in any other portion of history, until we approach modern times."

CHAPTER IX

THE SOVEREIGN AND THE GOVERNMENT DURING THE TENTH CENTURY: THE STRUGGLE FOR THE REGENCY AND CONFLICT OF THE CIVIL AND MILITARY FACTIONS: RISE OF THE FEUDAL FAMILIES

A. DUCAS AND PHOCAS TO LECAPENUS (912–920)

The Palace-Ministry under Alexander.

§ 1. IT would be a serious error to judge of the general state of the empire in the light of the distressing cabals and personal rivalries which solely engage the attention of authors and students in the space of thirty-three years. It will be necessary for our especial purpose to examine the events which led to the singular spectacle of the tenth century, the regency;—however tedious and unprofitable these circumstances may appear. For underneath an unedifying display of selfishness and hypocrisy or violence, there are real principles at stake, and the chief agents are not merely fighting each for his own hand. Each great party in the State service and each unscrupulous competitor represent a certain ideal of government; and these are defensible not only by arms or conspiracy but by argument and sound reasoning. Alexander had long enjoyed the empty title of emperor; he exercised its function after long waiting for a year and a month. Dissolute and slothful at public business, he had vigour only for hunting and tennis; and the question arose (to the populace of the capital a long familiar inquiry), "Who was to be the emperor's master?" The reign of Alexander bears some points of resemblance to the Orleans regency in the youth of Louis XV. A certain

The Palace-Ministry under Alexander.

cleric, who reminds us of Abbé Dubois, became the secret confidant; and two Slavonians, Gabrielopulus and Basilitza, were chief ministers, under the invariable title of patrician. It was even whispered that a design was on foot to castrate Constantine VII., to leave Basilitza heir to the throne. Surrounded by a crew of soothsayers and charlatans, Alexander preserved a complete detachment from public affairs. He chased Zoe the empress-mother from the palace, disgraced Admiral Himerius, and reinstated the late Patriarch Nicolas (with needless insult to the inoffensive intruder Euthymius). Yet the emperor himself would have held the solemn renewal and consecration of his totem (στοιχεῖον), the circus wild boar, to be the chief event in his reign. Basil I. believed in a barefaced hoax, and was expecting a summons from Elijah the Tishbite to ascend into heaven in a fiery chariot; but his son reverted to a rude and primitive belief, for which we have a parallel in the *Germania* of Tacitus (where the boar is a talisman and an amulet), and in the ancient superstitions of the close affinity of the life and fortunes of an individual with some material object or animal kin. A single public event is recorded: the insulting answer given to the envoys of Symeon the Bulgarian king (893–927), who after a peace of ten years was about to try the temper of the new ruler. Before the certain retribution could fall on Alexander's head, he expired of a complication of disorders, brought about by temulence and over-exertion in the tennis-court. Before his death he appointed a new Council of Regency, and we find ourselves back in the exact circumstances of the minority of Michael III., seventy years previous. But there is a momentous and significant difference in the person and character of their imperial tutors. First comes the restless and vindictive patriarch, bold enough to rebuke the inertness of Leo and to bear the consequences, but a firebrand, cruel and unforgiving: three unknown,

The Bulgarian peril and the Council of Regents.

Stephen, master of the palace, John Eladas, master of the offices, and a certain Euthymius, all base-born or alien menials named above; and the "Abbé Dubois," John Lazarus, who soon followed his master to the grave, and will trouble us no more. It seems clear that the populace, so far from believing themselves governed by an irresponsible despot, deemed it their mission to criticise, to protest, and to intimidate—cries of dissatisfaction were raised not merely among the generals but in the common talk of the city. "The Bulgarian army of vengeance was at hand; was the fate of the Empire to be entrusted to the nerveless and untried hands of courtiers? Let the military caste provide a champion." Alexander may have dreamt of rendering his nephew incapable of ruling. Romanus later certainly excluded his sovereign from the business or dignity of the monarchy, and perhaps desired to supplant him altogether in the succession. But the official classes, and the soldiers, and the commonalty seem never to have wavered in their allegiance. Pretenders arise, but only to deliver the rightful prince; letters written by him, or in his name, have marvellous effect; and the army of the most popular general of the time melted away like snow when a single audacious messenger impeaches him in the emperor's name for turbulence and treason.

The Bulgarian peril and the Council of Regents.

§ 2. The name of Constantine Ducas was in every one's mouth. Disgraced and restored to favour under Leo VI., he was now defending the Eastern frontier with success. So strong and frank was the expression of public feeling that the regents intimated to him in vaguest terms that he should accept the burden, and sent him the most sacred pledges of good faith. Ducas is unwilling to consent to the invitation, from a fear of this uncertain status, a military respect for law and usage, and a genuine attachment to the young emperor. Now follows a tragedy, happily exceptional in Byzantine history, though common enough in Western records down to recent times. He comes

Popular demand for a strong man: failure and death of Ducas.

Popular demand for a strong man: failure and death of Ducas.

to the capital with a small retinue, and lodges with Gregoras, a senator. The news of his arrival spreads. Before break of day a crowd collects, senators assemble; he is proclaimed emperor, and marching with flambeaux attempts to enter the circus, and at last turns to the palace. The regents have kept an unaccountable silence instead of sending to welcome him. He lays siege to the palace and is repulsed and slain. Three thousand are killed, and the carnage of the Nika riots finds a parallel. Secure in this quick triumph, the Council takes summary vengeance on the malcontents. Some senators are hung, some beheaded in public; Gregoras and Eladicus, a patrician, receive the tonsure. The wife of Ducas is shorn and sent to reside on her estates in Paphlagonia; a son Stephen is made a eunuch; and of the whole family one son alone survives, Nicolas, guiltless of his father's treason, like Piso the Younger under Tiberius, and destined to win a noble death against the Bulgarians. It would not appear that their estates were at once confiscated. We may remark on the pitiless rancour of his namesake the patriarch, who would seem not merely to condone, but to encourage this severity. Thus ended the first attempt of one of the military leaders (οἱ ἄρχοντες of Psellus) to establish himself as working colleague of a minor. This time the civilian regency got the mastery, by trick and perjury. But their days were already numbered. King Symeon appears before the walls and is induced to retire. The immediate crisis past, matters for a time rested.

Zoe's Regency and vigorous anti-Bulgarian designs.

§ 3. In 914, the young emperor insists on his mother's recall; Zoe returns, and at once alters the whole face of affairs, no doubt for the better. The patriarch is desired to restrict his interest to spiritual things; Eladas is retained as Master of the Offices, but soon dies; and the other regents lose their posts. Three servants of Zoe receive high place in the palace, Constantine (as chamberlain) and two brothers, Con-

stantine and Anastasius Gongyles. The important captaincy of the Foreign Legion (ἑταιρειάρχης) is bestowed first on Dominicus, and on his removal, on John Garidas; and the title first found in Symeon's account of Michael's reign (850) will acquire increasing significance as the years pass. Finally, a eunuch, Damianus (a name he shares with a chamberlain under Michael III. and an emir of Tyre about this time), is given the function of Drungaire of the Watch (δρ. βίγλης). Thus the ministry was reconstructed, and once more, as under Constantine VI., a female regent was supreme. Gossip has played with the character of Zoe, but her administration was competent, her conception of imperial policy clear and straightforward. She it was who first pronounced (as it were) the watchword "*Delenda est Bulgaria*," and with this motto the consistent principles which swayed the second Basil. On this single aim she concentrated the whole force of the empire; and for this purpose she humbled herself to gain an honourable peace with the Saracens. The caliph received the envoys with a mighty and brilliant display of his troops; but the superior valour and success of the Greeks in the past campaigns were attested by a singular fact—in the exchange of captives the Moslem in duress so far outnumbered the Christians that the empress received 120,000 lbs. of gold. This may dispose of the foolish calumny that the empire was exposed during the reigns of such pacific emperors as Leo VI. to the harassing raids of the Moslem, and that it bore the insults helpless to avenge them. We may well surmise that Ducas, the unfortunate pretender, carried the war into the enemies' country, and that the caliph's realm, in spite of outward magnificence already hastening to decay, was unable to retaliate. The empress, to make her position doubly sure, accepted the offer of a defensive alliance with an Armenian prince; Ashot, son of the king of Vasparacan, coming as envoy to arrange terms.

Zoe's Regency and vigorous anti-Bulgarian designs.

Zoe's Regency and vigorous anti-Bulgarian designs.

Should the infidel neglect or violate his engagement, the Armenians were to attack them in the Roman interest. A similar method was pursued in Europe. The Patzinaks were engaged to fall on the rear of the Bulgarians, at their first movement against the empire; and the wisdom of this astute policy is extolled by Zoe's grateful son in an early chapter of his "Administration." Three small incidents happening about this time (915) may be recorded as significant of the general or exceptional conditions: Chazes, an oppressive governor of Achæa, was assassinated by a popular rising in an Athenian church: the son of a Venetian Doge, decorated with the coveted honour of *protospathaire*, was seized on the Croat frontier by Michael, "Duke of Sclabinia," and sent a captive to the Bulgarians: Adrinople was surrendered for gold to Symeon by an *Armenian* commandant, Pancratoucas, and seemingly recovered for the empire by the same means. It is obviously unfair to pass a sweeping indictment on the loyalty or justice of the officials, or the safety of the frontier, from the slender evidence which the chroniclers afford. I am disposed to believe that at this time military and civil governors had a high sense of duty, whether towards the foreigner or their own fellow-subjects,—placed by the envious socialistic conception of government and its functions, so immeasurably beneath the official hierarchy.

Zoe's policy thwarted by dissensions of military leaders.

§ 4. The whole forces of the empire were now concentrated against the Bulgarians; the court cannot at least be accused of vacillation. Zoe began that firm and resentful policy which, interrupted for a time by the Eastern conquests of Basil II.'s regents, was resumed by him and brought to a final conclusion. The treasury was able to make liberal presents and promises to the troops; the Church could bless a pious enterprise; and one of the most perfectly equipped armies that had ever left the capital set forth with the brightest auspices. All the heads of the well-known families of military

specialists were there: Leo *Phocas*, son of Nicephorus, was in chief command; Bardas, his brother, fifty years later Cæsar during his son's reign; Romanus and Leo, sons of Eustathius Argyrus, already mentioned; and Nicolas, son of the pretender Ducas, who had been generously pronounced guiltless of his father's adventure and retained at his post. Melias, the *Armenian*, feudal governor for the empire of the Theme Lycandus which he had himself created, came at the head of his own *Armenian* levies,—colonists and settlers from the shores of the Caspian, tenants and men-at-arms of their captain and landlord. We must not fail to do justice to the trustful and patriotic spirit of the empress and her advisers. A great and important point of policy is determined; the overthrow of the Bulgarian Empire. The safety of this concentrating movement is assured by adroit and yet honourable diplomacy. The military leaders assuming, as it is easy to detect, the familiar feature of half-independent "wardens of the marches," great proprietors in Cappadocia or Paphlagonia, are sent forward without suspicion on a notable enterprise certain of success. Gibbon, who but ill conceals his ignorance and impatience of the whole period, falls into error about the site and the significance of the battle, or rather series of battles, which ensued. Achelous is a castle on the Danube, not the classic stream; and the real lesson of the failure of a splendid effort is not national cowardice, but the peril of the competition of professional soldiers. Everything had been assured that came within the province of the home administration. The equipment was perfect, the commissariat unimpeachable, the courage of the troops beyond dispute, the Patzinak allies were waiting to do their part. But the example of Ducas had kindled the secret fires of ambition in many souls; every marshal carried a diadem in his knapsack. Lecapenus, son of Theophylact the Unbearable, a man of humble origin

Zoe's policy thwarted by dissensions of military leaders.

Zoe's policy thwarted by dissensions of military leaders.

(ἰδιώτης κ. ἀγράμματος, according to his son-in-law and colleague) had been Admiral of the Fleet since the last year of Leo VI. He was stationed at the Danube's mouth, to co-operate with the land forces at the fitting moment. During his singularly long command he had gained the affections of the sailors. Leo Phocas was more intent on discovering the intentions of Lecapenus than on securing the easy victory which lay within his grasp. A first engagement was successful; but the commander is found unaccountably missing; he had gone in secret to reconnoitre, not the movements of the foe, but the designs of the High Admiral. A pause ensues; the army flies helpless and demoralised; and the total and irretrievable defeat that followed has not many precedents in the records of the empire. Military honour suffered a deep stain; and the reproach was only wiped out with the success of Basil Bulgaroctonus. The Patzinak allies, tired of the quarrels of Romanus with John Bogas, who had conducted Zoe's negotiations with them, refused to wait longer, and returned to their own haunts. The shattered remnants of the army regain the capital; Leo Phocas impeaches Romanus of high-treason, and he is sentenced to be blinded. Zoe, like Eudocia Macrembolitissa a century and a half later, spares the disgraced admiral, as Romanus Diogenes was spared. Meantime, with the fury of shame and despair, the forces repulse Symeon's bold attack on the capital itself. A spirit is displayed which at an earlier moment might have broken for ever the Bulgars' power. Leo Phocas performs prodigies of valour; Nicolas dies bravely in the fight. The danger is over, and domestic intrigue may again occupy public attention.

Competition of Phocas and Lecapenus.

§ 5. Men were generally agreed that a woman and a child could no longer bear the entire burden of empire; and the times were ripe for a revolution. A Pretender arises, in obedience to popular ex-

pectancy, claiming to be Constantine Ducas. He collects a few followers, fails, and suffers one of those cruel deaths which sometimes startle us in this lenient period, and remind the reader that we are still in the dark ages and the tenth century. The two protagonists are now left jealously confronting: the stage is clear for the commander of the troops and the admiral of the fleet. On the advice of Theodorus, Constantine's tutor, Zoe throws in her fortunes with the latter, and excludes from the imperial dignity the powerful family of Phocas for more than forty years. Secret messages pass and repass between the flagship and the palace; the emperor himself, now fourteen years old, personally indited a letter,—doubtless in an elegant style and handwriting which astonished the rough sailor. All Constantinople takes sides in the duel of the two champions; and waits for the inevitable declaration of open hostilities. This is precipitated by Constantine, chief of the palace-eunuchs and brother-in-law of Leo. He comes, haughty and unattended, to pay the men of the fleet. He is seized by Romanus' orders. In the palace, Theodorus explains to the affrighted empress that the rising is aimed at Leo, the corrupter of the troops, at Constantine, the intriguer of the palace. Young Constantine claims to reign alone, and his ministers banish his mother and boldly cashier Leo from the colonelcy of the Guards; Garidas, already mentioned, succeeds. At the same time a son, Symeon, and a brother-in-law, Theodorus, are permitted to retain the joint-command of the Foreign Legion. When he dutifully retires without a word, they too are dismissed; and with singular lack of penetration, Leo approaches with his tale of grievances the very last person in the world who could listen with sympathy—Romanus, the High Admiral. Foolishly satisfied that he can leave his interest safe in the hands of his rival, Leo retires to his Cappadocian estates. On Lady Day, 919, the fleet in

Competition of Phocas and Lecapenus.

Competition of Phocas and Lecapenus.

full array appears before the palace. Constantine consents to interview the admiral, and after mighty oaths invests him in the imperial chapel with the office of Grand *Hetæriarch*, command of those foreign mercenaries who since the reign of Michael III. have become increasingly important to the safety of the reigning emperor. Constantine the eunuch, now set at liberty, writes a reassuring letter to Phocas, and pacifies his doubts and anxiety. Towards the end of April, the emperor marries Helena, daughter of Romanus; and the proud title *βασιλεοπάτωρ* is revived to give him precedence (in the punctilious court) over all officials and ministers. Christopher, afterwards associate-emperor for some ten years, succeeds to the foreign command.

Success and rapid promotion of Lecapenus.

§ 6. The wrath of Leo Phocas knew no bounds; he had been miserably tricked. Constantine the eunuch escapes from the dangerous and uncongenial atmosphere of the palace where he no longer ruled, and sought his relative in Cappadocia. He finds him caballing with three other great lords of the province. Soon all the scanty troops in Asia Minor are aroused; for, secure against the Moslem by Zoe's diplomacy, it had been denuded of most of its native forces for the Bulgarian war. The watchword is the loyal cry, "*Forward to Constantinople to save our young emperor!*" But into the forces, assembling opposite the capital, there penetrates a clever emissary Symeon. He persuades the soldiers of Leo's treason, and displays a violent letter written by the hand of the imperial calligraphist. The loyal troops desert; Leo, left almost alone, is taken and blinded; and Romanus expresses with doubtful sincerity the greatest grief at this summary penalty without orders. The wily admiral was now convinced that for him there was no safety, for the empire no stability, unless he assumed the diadem and the inviolable purple buskins. Attempts were made to assassinate him. It was reported that Zoe had mingled a deadly potion

only escaped by accident; the empress-mother was conducted, at least on this pretext, into a convent, out of a public career which she had honourably filled, whatever in the low gossip of the time may have been her private failings. One by one the former friends and associates of Romanus are removed; with great and perhaps needless ingratitude, he arrests Theodorus, the founder of his fortunes, at table, by the hands of John Curcuas, and despatches him to solitude on his Hellespont estates. The steps now are easy to the supreme place. On September 24 he becomes Cæsar; and emperor and colleague on December 17. Amidst the greatest tranquillity of the empire within and without, an almost bloodless revolution has been effected. A new family, unknown to fame twenty years before, has seized the throne; and in a short time three sons will further strengthen (or imperil?) its fortunes. But the legitimate heir will be reduced to the fifth place in this strange imperial corporation. I have dwelt, it may be objected, with disproportionate care and superfluous detail on the events of a brief period of nine years,—events which display merely the weakness of the empire, the corruption of the court, the odious and contemptible character of the "Romans." I am of another opinion. In these events, related without understanding by the chroniclers, read by us to-day as mere romantic tales of adventure and lawless ambition, far weightier issues are concerned than personal self-seeking, than the natural rivalry of a soldier and a chamberlain. These few years are the preparation for that anomalous expedient which secured to the empire some of her most brilliant triumphs, the military regency side by side with a respected sovereign of older lineage, residing almost like a deity in the sacred recesses of a palace-temple. But they teach more than this: here first clearly emerges the conflict between two intelligible ideals, —of a pacific and conservative civilian state, of a

Success and rapid promotion of Lecapenus.

Separation of the imperial functions.

Separation of the imperial functions.

strenuous and aggressive military monarchy. The next century following Basil II.'s assumption of real control (*c.* 985) witnesses the fatal steps by which the empire was ruined by the incompatible claims of these two principles; the suspicion of the central government, defenceless like the Roman Senate against a determined proconsul leading devoted troops; the jealous retrenchment of needful military subsidies, the hoarding or thriftless policy which either stored useless ingots or spent the entire revenue, the surplus resources of the realm, on palace extravagance and the amusements of an idle populace: on the other hand, the dangerous rivalries of a landed feudal class that had grown up to the expert use of arms in the long internal security and active foreign policy of the Iconoclasts,—their impatience of civilian dictation, an impatience shared by every soldier of every age and a standing menace in our own time to the stability of France,—and their distrust of each other.[1]

Active Regent and legitimate Recluse.

Of all this later development the earliest years of the tenth century give unmistakable premonitions. Respect for human life, reverence for a hereditary line; the retirement of the reigning sovereign into a seclusion where he becomes the puppet of anonymous influences; the vigour of a female regency, and the capable policy adopted to consolidate the European *themes;* the dangerous rivalry not merely of the two services, civil and military, but of marine and soldier; and the haughty or apprehensive abstention of generals who sulk like Achilles in their tent and will not win an easy victory for fear that others may reap the reward: these are some of the features or lessons shown in this brief period. The next century and a half will trace the further progress of the great duel; I can perhaps justify

[1] For possessing a genuine class solidarity the Ἄρχοντες would fight for the honour of their order, but dissolve into hostile units when once the hated and unpatriotic government of chamberlains had been displaced.

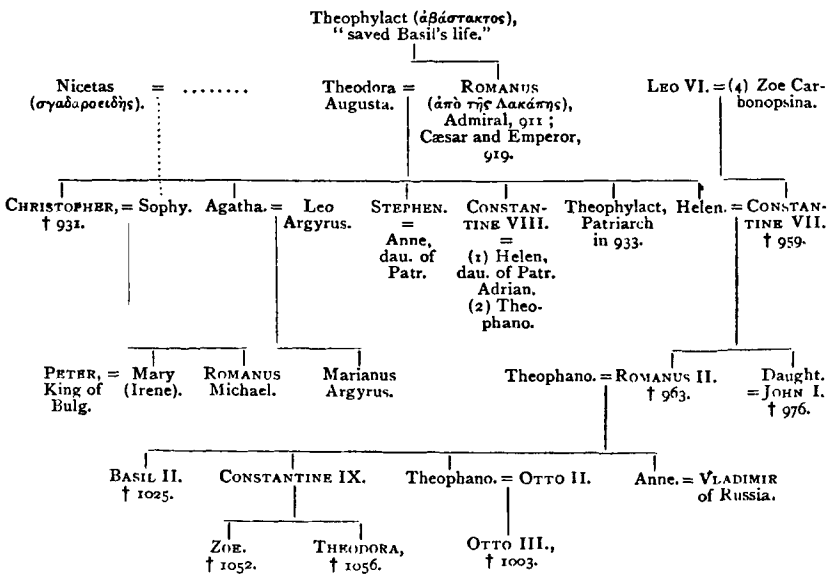
both combatants. For the empire needed valiant soldiers, if only they were true patriots. It depended no less upon the perfect civilian machinery of control and supply, which, in the Byzantine as in every monarchy, must find its centre in the cabinet of the Prince. But this once unique and indivisible figure was split into two halves. Before, the emperor was ubiquitous, omniscient, and master of all the arts of peace and war. Specialism has invaded high places; an amicable division of sphere has taken place. For the next sixty years we have a Mikado and a Shogun.

Active Regent and legitimate Recluse.

B. ROMANUS AND HIS SONS (920–945)

§ 1. The following table will display more lucidly than an express account the family and connections of the new regent-emperor, and the means adopted to strengthen a precarious position.

Family of Romanus I.: popular Legitimism.


Theophylact (ἀβάστακτος), "saved Basil's life."
Nicetas (σγαδαροειδής). = ...
Theodora Augusta. =
ROMANUS (ἀπὸ τῆς Λακάπης), Admiral, 911; Cæsar and Emperor, 919.
LEO VI. = (4) Zoe Carbonopsina.
CHRISTOPHER, † 931. = Sophy.
Agatha. = Leo Argyrus.
STEPHEN. = Anne, dau. of Patr.
CONSTANTINE VIII. = (1) Helen, dau. of Patr. Adrian. (2) Theophano.
Theophylact, Patriarch in 933.
Helen. = CONSTANTINE VII. † 959.
PETER, King of Bulg. = Mary (Irene).
ROMANUS Michael.
Marianus Argyrus.
Theophano. = ROMANUS II. † 963.
Daught. = JOHN I. † 976.
BASIL II. † 1025.
CONSTANTINE IX.
Theophano. = OTTO II.
Anne. = VLADIMIR of Russia.
ZOE. † 1052.
THEODORA, † 1056.
OTTO III., † 1003.

The general verdict passed on the rule of this upstart must be entirely favourable. The empire

Family of Romanus I.: popular Legitimism.

was in sore need of a strong hand at the centre, acknowledged by all. A regent-colleague united power and responsibility, too long separated in the secret and accidental influences of the last thirty years. It is true that Romanus behaved unfairly to his ward: he reduced him beneath Christopher, Stephen, and Constantine VIII., and even proposed to give the infant Romanus precedence of the *legitimate* sovereign, whose servant and champion he had ever professed himself. It is also true that, like Eli (to whom the frank monks and confessors compared the contrite emperor), he overlooked the failings of his sons. But he was a sedulous and business-like administrator; a kind and charitable dispenser of the imperial stores to the distressed; a mild and indulgent judge towards the treasonable conspirator; and, above all, a capable master of those jealous and unruly services which the empire employed and feared. At last there was an emperor with the dignity of Cæsar, who was at the same time a man of affairs, and gave close attention to the public welfare. For a whole generation (886-919) this idea of the imperial function had been entirely in abeyance. The position was an inheritance which, like landed property, the owner at once made over to agents and factors, while he enjoyed the fruits of their labours. The populace of the capital, so far from resenting this easy partition of duties and profit, regarded it as the normal and proper state. It would be wrong to suppose that over an indigent, ignorant, and servile mass domineered a few proud palace officials or feudal captains from Lesser Asia; that the throne was handed about according to secret intrigues of the noble and seditious. I believe it possible to trace a very clear understanding in the people's mind of the rights and limits of their interference. This intervention was neither tumultuous nor arbitrary. It would seem as if the mob, divided into guilds of handicraftsmen and factions of the

circus (untroubled by the new modern curse of unemployment) held the scales of the constitution, and were the final arbiters of affairs. They were faithful to Constantine VII. and grumbled at his retirement, while they acknowledged the ability and the charity of his regent. They upheld the throne of his son and grandsons by their silent loyalty, which put the unique dignity out of reach of the ambitious Phocas or Zimisces. They endured the brief irritability of Constantine IX. as they had borne the long and exacting government of Basil II. They acquiesced in the female right, which for thirty years bestowed upon the lucky (or unlucky) husband of Zoe the most exalted dignity in the world. They heard without murmur or regret of the death of Romanus Argyrus (1034), and beheld with indifference the sudden elevation of the handsome epileptic who succeeded him. But under this seeming inattention or carelessness, they watched with profound solicitude the fortunes of the two princesses. A suspicion of rudeness or neglect ensured the unpopularity of the regents, who during this epoch never once attracted the loyal regard or affection of the people. They regarded them with cold and critical gaze, or on occasion burst out into loud and scornful insult. As the redoubtable premier of a modern State, armed with a democratic mandate and supported by a solid phalanx of silent voters, can never occupy in the public gaze the same place which is given to a scion of the royal house; so the Byzantine populace, much like our own people to-day, had a rough but clear outline of the respective duties of royalty, regency, and democracy. The regents were something like paid servants after all, stewards of a great estate, which, when all was said and done, only changed hands three times in 145 years, at the death of the seventh and ninth Constantine and at the death of Theodora (1056). Gibbon represents these astute, affectionate, and equitable citizens as a mob of

Family of Romanus I.: popular Legitimism.

Family of Romanus I.: popular Legitimism.

slaves, or rather a herd of cattle. But the verdict is superficial and unfair, like his entire treatment of later Roman history. It might be adroitly turned against the whole system of female sovereignty, in which some modern thinkers have seen realised the ideal of constitutional government—that strange yet necessary compromise between the sacrosanct dignity and kingship, and the business function which makes the temporary wielder of authority responsible both to his lord and to the nation.

Conspiracies against Romanus I.: public indifference at his overthrow.

§ 2. Neither the family of Romanus nor the house of Phocas obtained a hold upon the popular mind. Men heard with equanimity of a new plot against the regent-emperor, and the lenient justice meted out to the seditious; and under Romanus conspiracies were frequent. Leo Argyrus, a son-in-law of Romanus, combined with Stephen, master of the palace, and Paul the Orphanotrophus (a title still more conspicuous in the next century): all are banished. At a review of the household (or the household troops), Arsenius the Patrician and the captain of the Manglabites, conspire to seize Romanus and the young Constantine: betrayed by a slave, they are blinded, and their estates are forfeited. A third cabal, also composed of officials near the throne, is detected and punished; the culprits are beaten, tonsured, and exiled. In 924 occurred a sedition of a different sort; a centrifugal, separatist, or feudal rising, rather than a personal quarrel with Romanus, which will throw some light on that most interesting problem of the time—the relations with the Armenian kings, vassals, and peers. Bardas Boïlas, a patrician, unites with potent nobles of the frontiers of Pontus and Armenia, Adrian and Tazates, aiming at the erection of a separate and local principality. Curcuas, who is the permanent and impassable sentinel of the East, comes up from Cappadocian Cæsarea, and speedily defeats the plot; he puts out the eyes of Adrian as

the most culpable, takes Tazates into the corps of Imperial Manglabites (a place he lost later on a renewal of treason), and sends Boïlas into a monastery. The soldiers of the rebels receive a complete amnesty. The next attempt was confined to the palace. John, a minister, had married the daughter of Cosmas the Postmaster (λογοθ. δρομ.). He conceives the design of ousting the usurper and taking his place. His father-in-law and Constantine, grand master of the palace, spur on his ambition. Romanus, tired, negligent, or contemptuous of these fruitless cabals, for long refuses to believe or to take action; at last he is convinced of their guilt, gives the two chief criminals time to escape to the inviolable retreat of the cloister, and merely flogs the patrician Cosmas. The idle discontent of courtiers now spreads to the immediate circle of the regent himself. Nicetas, a firm supporter of Romanus during the crisis of 919, plots against him in 931, probably in conjunction with Christopher, who married his daughter: he is made a monk, and Sophy, on the death of her husband, being still under suspicion, is removed from the palace. There is a welcome interval of some ten years during which Romanus had leisure for an anxious and diligent administration, the reform of the land laws, the relief of distress, the liberation of creditors, the repulse of Hungarians and Russians, and contrite penance for his own moral lapses. Becoming (like Michael IV.) severe and ascetic, abandoning in pious exercises some of his grasp of affairs, Basil the Bird (a faithful servant of Constantine now grown to middle age) unites with Manuel Curtice, the *Armenian*, to excite the conceit and ambition of the two younger Augusti, Stephen and Constantine VIII. Stephen yields and Constantine refuses. Romanus is easily seized, covered with a mantle, taken to an adjoining island, and tonsured, during the last days of 944. The two brothers (for Constantine is willing to share

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the fruits if not the danger of crime) discover to their chagrin that the profits of the revolution have fallen to the rightful heir. The will of Lecapenus (with the mournful foresight of a disappointed parent) gives back the chief place in the Augustan college to the seventh Constantine. The joy of the people at this revival of legitimacy is unbounded; and it requires no great audacity for the new monarch or the new ministers to ship off the superfluous regents first to their father's retreat, and then to their several prisons (wherein Stephen survives nineteen and Constantine but two years).

His diplomatic conduct of foreign affairs: Bulgarian alliance.

§ 3. The foreign wars and the heroes who conducted them cannot be alien to our subject, for the military power is a *momentum* in the constitutional changes which we are attempting to estimate. The Bulgarian war engages a trio of generals (921), two closely connected with Romanus and members of the feudal aristocracy of birth and arms—Leo Argyrus and Pothus his brother, and John ῥαίκτωρ (a title found also during Zoe's regency, 911). The new Admiral of the Fleet recalls the memory and name of the *Armenian* Cæsar under Theophilus, Alexius Musel. A total and disgraceful defeat ensues, perhaps due to the same jealous division of command which had doomed the splendid promise of the earlier campaign under Leo Phocas in 919. A summer palace of the emperor is pillaged and burnt; and the whole shore ravaged within an alarming distance from the capital. In 923, Symeon conducts a second insulting attack on Byzantium, but is repulsed by the valiant conduct of Sacticius, captain of the watch . . . (δρουγγ. βιγλ.), who died gloriously in the moment of success. In the next move of the restless enemy, Romanus scores a distinct diplomatic victory. The African Sultan is approached by Symeon with a view to an alliance against the empire, but the envoys are seized in Calabria and sent to the capital. The compliments of Romanus

win the caliph ; he remits one-half of a tribute, which we acknowledge with shame was owing, to secure the immunity of Italian shores, and renounced the proposed alliance with the Bulgarians. In 925, Adrinople was again seized, and soon regained by the empire ; but the next year, Symeon obtains an interview with Romanus, who expostulates with him and wins a great diplomatic triumph. The king returns home highly pleased with the modesty and judgment of the emperor, and it is many years before Bulgaria becomes again a formidable or vindictive foe. The same mild and considerate bearing secured the affection of the Serbs, who, after seeing their country ravaged by Bulgaria, place themselves under the protection of the empire and continue its vassals. A wise and clement policy in Greece secured the allegiance or quiescence of the Maïnotes, still half-autonomous, as they continued to be until the fall of the Turkish dominion ; and the Slav (who refused levies and tribute fixed under Michael III.) was pacified and relieved of burden. Romanus no doubt welcomed the chance of completing this general policy of conciliation. In 927, Symeon died, and the glory of Bulgaria was past. Hungarians, Croats, and Patzinaks pressed round the headless nation, but no enemy was so dreaded as the empire. Byzantine tradition was set aside in the marriage of Christopher's daughter Mary to the new King Peter, who visited the capital to take away his bride, deeply impressed by its stately order and wealth. The alliance, unlike some sudden political connexions, was of deep and lasting value ; Mary, renamed Irene, journeyed to and fro between the two courts as emissary and guarantee of peace. Romanus now turns his attention to the desolate cities of Thrace and Macedonia, and rebuilds and colonises them. In 934 he finds that the Bulgarian sway in the Balkans has only been reduced to open the road to more dangerous neighbours, the Hun-

His diplomatic conduct of foreign affairs : Bulgarian alliance.

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garians: these press to the capital, but are induced to retire by the tact (and no doubt the generosity) of the emperor. Six years of peace ensue, broken only by the distant rumours of troubles in Italy, and a terrible Russian invasion in 941 takes the government and the capital entirely unprepared. Of the imperial fleet but fifteen disabled or superannuated galleys lay near, the rest were guarding the southern Asiatic shores from Saracen raids. These, Romanus equips and mans. Theophanes disperses the invaders with Greek fire. Other vagrant bands of Russian marauders are cut off on the north coast of Asia by Bardas Phocas, and Curcuas, the hero of the Eastern frontier, rapidly mobilises and comes up in time to share in the overthrow. The expedition was a complete failure. The wife of Inger, the Russian chief, adopts Christianity, but we shall find their son, Swiatoslaf (Σφενδόσθλαβος) among the enemies of the empire some thirty years later. So far as a steadfast policy was possible in the shifting tribal quarrels of the North Balkans, Romanus adopted and pursued it. It was no longer an aggressive war to the death, as under the regency of Zoe. The veteran admiral was entirely pacific and preferred to triumph by compliments and discussion, rather than by arms. We cannot doubt that the peninsula recovered much in this quarter of a century, in spite of the vulnerable capital, exposed to any pirate from the north by land or sea. The wide battle-ground of the rival empires becomes more settled and peaceful, and what a central government could do to rebuild and to secure was efficiently done.

Curcuas and his long control of the eastern frontier.

§ 4. The life of John Curcuas by Manuel, in eight books, is unhappily lost, but the scanty records in the annalists leave no doubt as to the vigour and skill with which he defended the *Eastern* frontier. For over twenty-two years he was in supreme command of the oriental troops, and with his brother Theophilus, Duke of Chaldia, the chief guardian of

the empire. It would appear that Romanus, himself no active warrior, knew how to select and to trust his officers. The two brothers Curcuas belonged to the new warlike nobility, that was recruited chiefly from *Armenian* families and settled in true feudal fashion, with retainers, peasants, and men-at-arms in the rich land of the Armeniac and Anatolic Themes. John was born in Little Armenia, and was the son of a captain of Ἱκανᾶτοι, found conspiring against Basil in 879. His son Romanus will be seen among the staff of Nicephorus Phocas; and his brother, whose just fame he eclipsed, is the grandfather of John Zimisces, the third of the capable and patriotic regents of this century. The Saracen danger dwindled and disappeared: Melitenè passed again under Roman sovereignty; the Euphrates was once more a Roman stream; and the frontiers were extended from the Halys to the valley of the Tigris. The caliphate, passing under the same inexorable law of royal impotence and military dictatorship, showed no consistent policy, and wasted its force in internal disorders. Curcuas was no mere valiant commander like Leo Phocas. He was astute and conciliatory; on his first capture of Melitenè, home of the most dreaded Eastern neighbour of the empire, his tact and clemency converted two emirs into friends and vassals of Rome; they joined his expeditions and fought in the imperial service. On their death in 934, the town was recovered by the Saracens; but Curcuas, with the aid of Melissenus, of the Lycandus *Theme* again assaulted it, and razed it to the ground. It ceased to be an infidel centre, and the open territory round it was joined to the prosperous new theme. Phasianè and Theodosiopolis had been regained under Leo VI. by Catacalon, and the Saracens evicted; but the king of Iberia had somehow seized the region, alleging a just claim. Romanus (no doubt on the advice of John Curcuas) preferred rather to abate the imperial pretensions than

Curcuas and his long control of the eastern frontier.

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to make an enemy of an Eastern Christian: he concedes to the king all land north of the Araxes, and he acquires Akhlat and Bitlis, near Lake Van. The conclusion of this brilliant and useful career shows a sinister light on the anonymous influence which made and unmade generals and set a bound to the mercy or competence of the autocrat. A court faction stirred up suspicion of his loyalty, and Romanus after inquiry was convinced of his innocence. To show his whole-hearted confidence, he proposed an alliance between Euphrosyne, daughter of Curcuas, and Romanus, son of Constantine VIII. The emperor was unable to carry out his design, or save his friend from the storm of indignation and envy. The high officials triumphed—jealous of a hero's renown. Curcuas bowed his head to the storm, retired after continuous toils of twenty-two years, and doubtless listened to the regrets of the emperor, who had to confess his own helplessness. Powers indeed had arisen in the group of families who sustained the dignity of the empire, in the satellites of the palace, in the civil bureaucracy, that put an effective restraint on the free-will of a sovereign still nominally absolute.

Parental supervision of Romanus.

§ 5. We are not concerned as a rule with the private character of the emperors, on which such valuable time and space has been wasted. History should be a record of public service, not of secret and unwarranted scandal. But it would be unfair to pass over the democratic sympathies and kindliness which secured the support of the people, by no means servile, to a despotic system. The indulgence of the regent to conspirators is known; but in his care for popular distress he gratuitously outstripped the demands made on a modern premier or a modern sovereign; and we must not forget that he combined both offices. The hard winter of 932, followed by bad seasons, and their retinue, pestilence and famine, brought out the good qualities

of a kindly man of business. He remits taxation, builds orphanages and almshouses, constructs public gardens for the people, and, in one moment of generosity, freed all the petty debtors of the capital, not by abolishing the debt but by satisfying the creditor. It is easy to turn to ridicule the parental and tutelary instinct which prompted this minute and untiring care. But it is well to remember (1) that Romanus lived in an age when, outside the empire, office and kingship had almost no functions, and government was parcelled out among a herd of unauthorised and violent agents: (2) that the present age, with its foolishly exalted belief in the duty and scope of rulers, can say nothing to disparage the well-meant but excessive interference of the Byzantines. It is clear that the emperor, as popular representative against aristocracy, occupied, or was expected to occupy, the same position as Julius, Augustus, or Trajan. He alone, in an age when the current set steadily towards feudalism, was the sole guarantee of justice, or the sole asylum for the oppressed. Romanus had to contend with palace cabals, robbing the empire of its best defenders, with the dangers of a precarious position, with the encroachments of a landed and military oligarchy. These threatened to control not merely the whims of monarchy but the ordinary course of justice, the success of arms, the welfare of the provincial poor. He broke his oath, it is true, to Constantine VII., and made tardy amends in his last testament. But he fully justified his usurpation. No mere vulgar ambition exalted and sustained him in an unenviable dignity. Kindly, charitable, politic, and vigilant, he made possible the later extension of the empire. He left the Balkan peninsula in peace, the Eastern frontier secure; and he may well have carried into the sometimes penitent, sometimes cheerful seclusion of his convent the natural satisfaction of a heavy burden well and honourably borne.

Parental supervision of Romanus.

C. The Regency in Abeyance (945–963) and Restored (963–976).

The Great Chamberlains: Bringas and the two Basils.

§ 1. Constantine VII. emerged from a refined seclusion to become at once a popular favourite. This affection supported the dynasty continuously for over one hundred years, forgave the exactions of Basil, condoned the suspicious indolence of his brother, and upheld Zoe and Theodora through evil and good report.* Under Constantine and his son the office of regent, or acting colleague to the sovereign, was left in abeyance. It was only revived when another long minority threatened to impair the vitality of a State which always took its tone from its chief citizen, and expected him both to initiate and to complete. The reign of Constantine, in its fullest extent (911–959), was a period of marked recuperative power and steady policy. The realm suffered nothing from the control of Romanus, and the same wary and defensive principles were maintained under his son-in-law. At the close of his reign the empire, now ready to sustain the burden of wars of aggrandisement, burst into that Chauvinist enthusiasm which fills the rest of the century with heroic exploits. The military spirit carries off the legitimate and purple-born as well as the regents; and the regret and fatigued exhaustion which follow all wars, whether successful or adverse, only set in when Basil, like Justinian or Lewis XIV., lived too long for his reputation, if not for his vigour.—The bloodless revolution which dispossessed the family of Lecapenus had been the work of Basil the Bird (ὁ πετεινός).[1] His influence, sometimes obscured, was never wanting till the moment of his mad venture and tragic penalty (962). Under his adroit suggestion, the *personnel* of the ministry was entirely changed: he himself assumed an office of growing importance, the command of the Foreign Legion, ἑταιρειάρχης;

[1] Or the Cock, see C. vii., i. 78, 3.

six-and-twenty years before, Romanus had begun his ambitious career with the same title. Bardas Phocas becomes Commander-in-chief, *Domestic of the Schools*, a name to which was often prefixed the term *great*, a use maintained down to the last days of the empire. Nicephorus, his son, the future emperor, is prefect of the East; Leo Phocas (afterwards *Curopalat*) is governor of Cappadocia; a third brother of this all-important family, Constantine, is entrusted with the prefecture of Seleucia. Marianus Argyrus, grandson of Romanus, but throughout faithful to the legitimate line, becomes Count of the Stable (κόμης στάβλου); Manuel Curtice, colonel of the night-watch (δρουγγ. βιγλ.); and the regency of Zoe is faintly recalled by the elevation of a Constantine Gongyles to be High Admiral of the Fleet. It is not difficult to see what influence provides the moving weight that decided the crisis: the Phocas family played General Monk to the Restoration. On January 27, 945, the two puzzled sons of Romanus, who had reaped nothing from their unfilial ingratitude, were quietly removed from the palace; Constantine VIII., the more spirited of the two, killing his gaoler two years later, and in turn slain by the attendant, was accorded an imperial funeral; Stephen survived nineteen years, and was (according to legend) poisoned by Theophano.[1] Romanus died in June 948, peaceful and penitent, and men forgot the Lecapenian regency, which had not been an inglorious epoch for the empire. But the secret and commanding influence of Basil the chamberlain, natural son of Romanus by a Bulgarian captive, will be found to dominate the next forty-two years; for the sole reign of Basil II. can scarcely be said to begin before the disgrace in 987 of his namesake, who had confronted Bringas and overcome him, who had raised Phocas and rid himself of Zimisces. When we remember the power wielded

The Great Chamberlains: Bringas and the two Basils.

[1] An unfortunate princess, who had the credit of all notable deaths at a later period which were not due to obvious violence.

The Great Chamberlains: Bringas and the two Basils.

by Empress Helen, and her general understanding with her base-born brother, we are justified in saying that the heirs of Romanus, recognised or unacknowledged, continued to sway the fortunes of Rome.

Literary culture and amiable character of C. VII

§ 2. First, as to the character of the new monarch, who has passed out of the hands of tutors and governors and come into his own at last. Just a century after Bardas the Cæsar he applies himself to the task of reviving letters and science, once more well-nigh extinct. He is typical of the Byzantine spirit; of the careful encyclopædic work of students without originality. He collected and preserved the remnants of learning or of the arts; amassed a library, and threw it open for public use. He set needy scholars, in quest of a Mæcenas, to work upon agriculture (γεωπονικά), the veterinary art (ἱππιατρική); and engaged them to excerpt the notable and edifying recitals of antiquity in the "*Historic Pandects*," of which we possess the valuable "*Embassies*" and the less profitable "*Virtue and Vice*." Upon the philosopher, scholar, and grammarian he showered favours; introduced into the still dignified Senate and placed on the episcopal bench. He was no mean painter and architect, and was unusually skilled in music and a fine singer. He may have learnt in adversity a genuine sympathy with the distressed, and he never appears so ignorant and indulgent as his father. Where he intervened in person he did right; and he had a long arm for wrongdoers: Theodorus Crinitas, governor of Calabria, bought corn at easy prices from the "Roman" subjects, and retailed at great profit to the Saracens; he is discovered and punished. His chief solicitude was for *justice;* and significantly enough, we are enabled to trace at this time two chief authors of mischief, the landed proprietors and the men-at-arms. In the provinces, the usual encroachment of the capitalist had followed the hard winter of 932. The reign of Romanus I. had witnessed the eviction of the yeoman under legal

forms. In rare cases the small adjacent properties were seized by force; far more often by plausible chicanery, or under the guise of a charitable mortgage and reluctant foreclosure. Constantine and his counsellors, with remarkable intrepidity and patience, revised all titles to landed estate for the last forty years; all unjust or questionable bargains were annulled and the land given back to the small occupier free of cost and embarrassment. It is possible that, like the imperial edicts of China, the imperial *novels* of Constantine were more honoured in the spirit than in the letter; but however imperfectly realised, such a design is a lasting testimony to the democratic and tribunal basis of Roman sovereignty, to a systematic defence of the poorer citizens against corrupt officials, powerful country neighbours, or overbearing soldiers. Constantine waged war with all three classes: the men-at-arms had oppressed the common people under Romanus, who, stay-at-home though he was, represented the ascendancy of the military party. But the restored emperor was emphatically a civilian. He restored the balance in an empire which still, amid the hopeless disorders of the time, maintained the supremacy of law, as the foundation of a civilised State. So far as an emperor can, he made ordinary justice cheap and incorruptible; like many of his distinguished predecessors from Tiberius onwards, he sat in the courts as assessor, to guide and encourage the judges and stop the eternal and interested delays of the attorneys. He made himself readily accessible to all who came with grievance or complaint. It was noticed that whereas the charity of Romanus had been content with alleviating immediate scenes of distress in the capital, Constantine was equally solicitous of the welfare of the provinces, too often neglected by a centralised monarchy. He revived a practice something like the Caroline institution of the imperial *missi*. Patricians whom he could trust were de-

Literary culture and amiable character of C. VII.

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spatched to the outlying districts as commissioners to inquire into the behaviour of officials or the insults of the military. Curcuas, once more restored to favour, was despatched to ransom captives; but the emperor reserved to himself, as a personal duty, the visitation of the prisons. He rebuilt at his own expense the houses consumed by a great fire, and handed over the new buildings to the grateful proprietors. It is clear that Constantine VII. had a noble and exalted view of the great administrative office which he held. It is easy to detect the weakness of a government which, instead of educating public opinion or sharing the burden of control with the nation, sets a single individual to watch the behaviour of the multitudinous petty kings, feudal or bureaucratic, that prey upon the Commons. It is the Chinese conception of the supreme authority, which believes that a secluded and ignorant youth, carefully kept even from the light of day and shrouded in impersonality and gloom, can control the official world. Yet the public, in modern as well as in ancient times, still secretly believes this world of salaried place-men or place-hunters to be irretrievably corrupt: from time to time it has armed a born sovereign or a chosen dictator with a popular mandate to sweep away the evil, *quod semper vetabitur semper retinebitur*. And Constantine lived in a complicated age, when modern abuses pressed close on the heels of the older mischief; when the privileges of soldiers, landlords, and hierarchs were used to coerce and despoil the poor.

His ministers, cabinet, gifts to officials, diplomacy.

§ 3. Basil the Bird was at first all in all; but the real prime minister of Constantine and his son Romanus was Joseph Bringas, who retained his authority till 963: he was treasurer and admiral, and we may perhaps notice a growing laxity in the old pedantic rule which, except on rare occasions, kept such offices apart. There are rumours that this universal supervision broke down in the increasing

complexity of the duties and problems of government. Helena and Basil were accused of intruding incompetent favourites and of putting responsible posts to auction;—a charge like that of poison, easy to make and difficult to refute.—The happy family life of the palace makes it hard to credit the subsequent stories about Romanus and Theophano. The court was neither niggardly nor profuse; it was neither dissolute nor austere: Constantine loved good cheer and social intercourse. It is said that he employed his accomplished daughter, Agatha, as intermediary (μεσῖτις) between the imperial closet and the cabinets of the various ministers. No abuse of this curious usage is noted; and indeed it was the peculiar tact of the emperor which made him treat his subjects as his children and transformed the realm into a single and a contented household.—The prefect of the city enjoyed a grave and responsible charge; he was head of the police department as well as chief stipendiary magistrate. Theophilus, after an earthquake, was desired to recover the buried effects and furniture, and restore them to their owners; he appropriated to his own use the greater part. Constantine was more ready to notice and to punish than Justinian; public indignation (never far from the surface in "despotic and servile" States) was aroused and satisfied. Theophilus yielded his post to Constantine, a *spathaire*, and he in turn to Theodorus Belônas, both of whom receive the praise of the historians. Luitprand has left us some curious details of one of those solemn distributions of gifts to the official class (ῥόγα) which marked the policy of the later empire: it is useful in establishing an order of precedence not always very clear. The three chief offices, master of the palace, grand domestic, and grand admiral, receive alike a costly box and 4 robes; the 24 μαγίστροι, 24 gold pounds and 2 mantles; the patricians, 12 and 1.—In foreign matters, Constantine followed the conciliatory policy of his father-in-law; he wooed an alliance with the

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Cordovan caliph, Abdurrahman, to divide the Moslem attack in East and West; and secured his friendship by a gift of 150 columns of choice marble,—once more a proof that the θαλασσοκρατία (of which the emperor speaks in his works) was neither an archaism nor an empty boast. Constantine welcomes to his court a Hungarian prince, Bulagud, who adopts the Christian faith along with rich gifts and the title of patrician. The old habits and instincts were too potent; the convert resumes his brigand raids with his paganism, and seems to have met a shameful death in Germany. Constantine had better success with Gylas, another Hungarian catechumen, whose sincerity was attested by his sparing the lands of the empire.—The Argyrus family were still in favour, and Marianus was successful in punishing a strange revolt of the usually loyal city of Naples; and later will be found (962) driving the Hungarians from Thrace, with the command of *prefect of the West*. Pothus Argyrus, his brother, hastily wards off a still closer attack of the Hungarians (958), as colonel of the guard, like Belisarius at the close of Justinian's reign.

Romanus II. and his advisers.

§ 4. The death of Constantine, the handsome and amiable prince, was widely deplored. Romanus II. dutifully followed his dying advice, and retained Joseph Bringas as chief minister throughout his reign. But he added a renegade cleric of his own choosing to the small conclave in the closet,—a eunuch-monk, John Cherina, who secured the coveted post of ἑταιρειάρχης. Sisinnius was made prefect of the city, and rose to be grand *logothete*, when his urban magistracy was filled by Theodorus Daphnopates. The vicarious glory of Romanus was only tarnished by the sedition of Basil the Bird, the sole conspiracy of the brief reign. Discontented with the circle of new favourites from which he had been excluded, he proposes to murder Romanus as he issues from the palace to the hippodrome. His

accomplices apparently saw nothing absurd in his suggestion that *he* should be the new monarch. But a Saracen named Joannitza or Joannicius informs Bringas. So far from setting a stern precedent to put an end to these futile and dangerous plots, Romanus merely makes the accused senators "run the gauntlet" of the popular derision (ἐπόμπευσεν); and reduced to a short period their exile in a cloister. The fate of the Bird was tragic and exemplary; on the discovery of his plot he lost his reason, and died soon after, a dangerous madman.—The chief interest of the new reign is not domestic intrigue but foreign aggrandisement; and its glory, belonging wholly to the lieutenants of the emperor, will be recorded when we have reason to tell the story of their elevation. The vigorous youth of Romanus, unexercised in political business or warlike cares, was spent and exhausted in hunting, athletics, and the wine-cup. There is no need to seek in darker vices the cause of the sudden break-down of one who always overtaxed his forces in the pursuit of these strenuous pleasures, which were to him the serious occupation of life. He died on March 15, 963, and once more two purple-born heirs succeeded to an unquestioned sceptre under a female regency. Martina in 641, Irene in 780, Theodora in 842, Zoe in 911, Theophano in 959: these are the empress-mothers who reigned over the Romans during a son's minority. Martina was expelled with ignominy by the Senate; Irene succeeded her own son by deposing him; Theodora maintained the dignity of court and empire in a lax age; and we have attempted to do some justice to the firm policy and administration of Zoe. Once more two children and a woman represent the majesty of the commonwealth; and as a necessary result, once again the eyes of the military leaders are raised to the prize at which Fortune pointed. At the close of our period, the same situation will recur: Eudocia Macrembolitissa (long supposed to be the

Romanus II. and his advisers.

The new Regency of Theophano.

The new Regency of Theophano.

elegant authoress of the *Violarium*) is left guardian and regent for Michael VII. and his brothers in 1067. It will be noted that in all these three later cases, a military dictator is the inevitable sequel. Lecapenus succeeds not so much by native ability as by public choice; Theophano soon comes to an agreement with Phocas; and Eudocia chooses the luckless Romanus Diogenes to be the protector of her children. —But before I treat of the revolution of 963 and trench upon that historical domain which has been so brilliantly filled by the works of Schlumberger and Rambaud, I must devote a section to the dry recital of the Eastern exploits of Nicephorus, which marked him out beyond question as the future associate-emperor.

The East and the family of Phocas.

§ 5. In 950, the Emir of Aleppo and Emesa, whom the Greeks call Hamdan, plunged through the Roman lines into Cappadocia, is reported to have slain the quite incredible number of 30,000, and lost all captives and booty by a swift reprisal of the Roman forces at the "pass of Cicero" in Mount Amanus. An odd story reaches us about a renegade priest near Tarsus, who was unfrocked for boldly repelling a Saracen inroad during divine service: annoyed at this evil return for his patriotism, he passed over to the Saracen faith and service, and seems to have done some mischief to his former friends. Meantime, Bardas Phocas, commander of the East, had become unpopular; his troops refuse to obey him on account of his greed, and in one engagement with Hamdan he is deserted by all but his own satellites or "gladiators." The kindly emperor removes the veteran by an honourable superannuation, and appoints Nicephorus, his son, to the place in 954: Leo, a brother, is named governor of Cappadocia; and Constantine, already prefect of Seleucia, is made lieutenant of the two. Almost the whole of Eastern Asia is thus within the control of the single family of Phocas. The first attempts of Nicephorus were unsuccessful:

The East and the family of Phocas.

he was severely defeated by Hamdan. It seems clear that, like Heraclius, he discovered his first and perhaps heaviest task in efforts to restore Roman discipline. Under the timid control of Romanus (as we learn elsewhere) the military element had oppressed and insulted the Commons; the avarice of Bardas had turned the soldiers loose to find spoil or bare nourishment among the citizens, whom they were engaged to protect. Like the later Janissaries, they had become the terror of their fellow-subjects and the scorn of the enemy. This necessary work went on silently while others gained laurels. Basil, *drungaire* of the Cibyrrhæot *theme*, a native of the Thracian Chersonese, attacked and sunk a great Saracen fleet from Tarsus in southern waters with the few ships which belonged to his maritime province. Leo marches on Samosata and takes the city; but the chief credit lay with a palace official, Basil the chamberlain, despatched to share the solicitude and perhaps watch the movements of the professional soldier. In this assault, too, John Zimisces first emerges into the light of history; he convoyed 1700 Saracen knights, well-mounted and well-equipped, to the capital, as a living trophy of a prosperous campaign. Meantime, the eyes of statesmen and soldiers were fixed on Crete, *quasi rebellibus vires ministrantem*. This had been in Saracen possession since the reign of Michael II. (820–829); the inhabitants had been slain, expelled, or forced to embrace Islam; and while this island remained a harbour and refuge for the miscreant pirates, the sea-supremacy of the Romans and the commerce it protected were alike unsafe. The first expedition was confided to a courtier, and proved a disastrous failure; Constantine Gongyles, the Paphlagonian, was perhaps the son of one of Zoe's early favourites and ministers; it is difficult to identify him with his namesake of nearly fifty years before. It was reserved for the reign of Romanus II. (961) to see Crete once again Roman. In that year Candia fell;

The East and the family of Phocas.

the Emir Curupas becomes an honoured pensioner at the Byzantine court, receiving lands and the offer of the senatorial dignity, if he would renounce Islam. This he refused, and one chronicler gravely informs us that he was a κουροπαλάτης, by an obvious misreading of the true name. His son (Anemas) serves faithfully under the empire against the Russians; and kills one of their three leaders. While Leo Phocas, decorated with the title General of the West, obtains a great victory over the Saracens at Andrassus in Galatia, Nicephorus marches east and takes Hierapolis, Anazarbus, and Aleppo. Such was the situation of affairs when Romanus died.

Duel of Bringas and Nicephorus: Patriarch's decisive action.

§ 6. The caste-system of Byzantine society recognised three great official orders—the Church, the Army and the Civil Service, sometimes sharply distinguished as the Senate. We find as early as the *Arcana* of Procopius—that is, about the middle of the sixth century—a clear line drawn between them; and in subsequent writers or annalists no account of a unanimous choice is complete unless they are all expressly mentioned, in conjunction with the irresponsible populace, their factions and gilds. The See of Byzantium had regained its spiritual power and independence; the patriarchate was no longer a provision like an English rectory for a younger son. In this very year John XII. in Rome was superseded by Leo VIII., under the control of Otho I.; and Polyeuctus in New Rome held a recognised position in the State, and would appear, at least during the regency of Theophano, to have enjoyed the right of summoning the Senate. He was friendly to Nicephorus, while Bringas, chief of the palace hierarchy, dreaded as a civilian the military influence. Nicephorus celebrated a formal triumph in the circus; and to disarm the suspicions of the minister, talked with him about the religious life which he soon intended to adopt. But he induces Polyeuctus to take this remarkable step of convoking the Senate and

inducing Bringas to obey. There the evils or dangers of the rule of females and minors were exposed with frankness; and a new office is proposed for the most efficient general. An extraordinary situation is revealed: Theophano and her two sons are not consulted. The civilians merely come to terms with the military leader. The Senate entrusts to him alone the appointment, promotion, and removal of all chief affairs of state; and engages to settle nothing about the conduct of the Eastern war except in agreement with him. But in the Roman Empire, any exceptional authority tended insensibly to monarchy; and the history of the republic is full of the various essays made to create great posts and commissions which should be in theory dependent on the civil assembly; and is full also of the failure of such a compromise. It is doubtful if Nicephorus was ambitious of the purple; he was probably quite contented with the formal sanction of his great war, and more than satisfied as Commander-in-chief with unlimited powers for the conduct of the Asiatic campaign. But fortune and the jealousy of Bringas hurried him up the steps of the throne. While he exercises his new recruits and restores ancient discipline in Cappadocia, while he prepares against Tarsus the whole force of his troops, Bringas writes secretly to John Zimisces and to Romanus Curcuas, his cousin, bidding them rid him of the turbulent general. They show the letters to Nicephorus, and incite him to find safety in the purple. He is saluted emperor on July 2, quite in the old Roman fashion, and is perhaps the first prince since Leo III. to owe his dignity to the shouts of the soldiers. At the news Bringas wavers, and shows none of his usual firmness. The son of Romanus I., Basil the chamberlain, becomes by an audacious device complete master of the situation. Arming his household, 3000 strong, he attacks the supporters of the minister with success. Bringas enters Saint Sophia by one door as a suppliant, while Bardas

Duel of Bringas and Nicephorus: Patriarch's decisive action.

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Phocas leaves by another to greet his victorious son. On August 16, Polyeuctus solemnly crowns his nominee: and the usual family compact of the Phocæ amicably distributes the chief places of profit or command. Leo Phocas is made κουροπαλάτης, an office which had by no means become a sinecure or an empty title; the command of the Eastern troops goes to Zimisces, who had merited the promotion; the venerable Bardas is named Cæsar; while a certain Manuel, natural son of Leo Phocas, the emperor's uncle, is found without credit in command in Sicily. Bringas was banished to Paphlagonia, then immured in a cloister, and died not long after the loss of an authority which he had wielded without a peer for nearly twenty years. The first achievement of the new reign and the new family, at last, after some imperial disappointment, was the gratifying success of Zimisces over the Saracens near Cilician Adana; the carnage was so great that the site long retained the title, "Hill of Blood."

Nicephorus II. takes personal command of the war.

§ 7. But Nicephorus was quite indisposed to entrust the war to his cousins or lieutenants. His elevation did not change his character or his conduct. Like Æmilianus (253), he believed in a certain straightforward division of labour. He carries off the Empress Theophano, now his wife (964), with her two sons to Cilicia; safely bestowing them out of reach of intrigue at home or foreign danger, he turns to his serious purpose. His army is now reinforced by a special troop of Armenians and Iberians, who form, as it were, the private bodyguard of the militant emperor. In 965, he recovers Anazarbus (which had relapsed), Mopsuestia, Tarsus; and in the same year Cyprus is reunited to the empire. In 966, he forces the Syrian pashaliks (or other emirates) to become tributary,—Aleppo, Tripoli, and Damascus; and lays siege without success to Antioch. He leaves behind him Burtzes to watch the blockade, and Leo Phocas, a eunuch, son of the new *Curopalat*, with strict orders

not to move during his absence. But the temptation is too strong; Antioch is reduced; and the two gallant officers cashiered for serious breach of discipline. Nicephorus at once loses by this untimely severity that respect which the Byzantines always paid to the strong leader. Other causes contributed to ruin his popularity. He allowed his soldiers the same licence they had enjoyed and abused under Lecapenus; in each resumption of the regency, it would appear that the men assumed the overbearing airs of a military ascendancy. The war was costly; new charges had to be imposed; money, hitherto spent in lavish doles to the nobility or public spectacles for the people, was directed to the urgent needs of the camp. The revenues of the Church were laid under contribution, and during the vacancy of a See, needlessly prolonged, a steward was sent to administer the revenue, while putting by a large surplus for the State-treasury. Every class felt itself aggrieved. Prophecies were rife as to the violent end in store for the gloomy emperor; the palace, under his orders, was transformed into a fortress. The empress was neglected and indignant; and the warriors (ἄρχοντες) no longer trusted the emperor. As for the people, they loaded him with abuse, and even pelted him with stones. A breach which could not be healed grew daily wider between the regent and his subjects. His brother's administration was unpopular; like Crinitas in Calabria he had profited by a scarcity in wheat (968), and retailed at a private profit that commodity which, to Byzantine socialists, the State held and distributed for the people's benefit.—Foreign policy was diverted into new and dangerous channels; the later "Roman" device of quelling one foe by calling in another was resorted to with mischievous effect. Calocyres the patrician had been sent (967) to invoke the growing power of the Norse princes in Russia against the Bulgarians. This country, which had gone rapidly backwards since the death of Symeon, was in no mood

Nicephorus II. takes personal command of the war.

His valour, unpopularity, and political errors.

His valour, unpopularity, and political errors.

to offer a stout resistance. The Russians overran Bulgaria. Nicephorus, to support the failing dynasty, suggests to King Peter a double marriage to the two youthful heirs of the empire ; he joyfully accepts, but dies of grief at the invasion of his country and loss of his power. By the end of this reign the Norsemen possessed the open land, and had secured the capital Peristhlaba.—Only the partial historian can pretend to see in Nicephorus Phocas a successful monarch and statesman. The Roman emperor had two main duties ; to preserve domestic peace, defend the people from encroachments of wealth or official arrogance, and support the lower ranks in that mistaken socialist policy of tutelage which was far too firmly rooted to yield to reform ; outside, to protect the frontier. A thoroughly capable general, he was unable to give time to civil matters ; his chief concern was to procure funds somehow for his campaigns. Abroad, the Eastern frontier has been secured and extended ; but the Balkan policy was both treacherous and mistaken. A once hostile and now friendly power was brought to ruin ; and the restored Bulgarian monarchs under Basil II. will be animated by a not unnatural hate of the Romans. The populace forgot the respect due to sovereigns ; their open affronts might have been serious to the monarchical prestige, had not the innocent children of Romanus won their affection and sympathy. The Church justly felt aggrieved at the usurpation of Phocas ; and tidings of his savage murder (gradually published or whispered in the closing days of 969) were received with profound indifference or intense relief. It was just over a century since a similar massacre had ended the reign of a very different man.

John Zimisces and the settlement of Bulgaria.

§ 8. Basil the son of Romanus, for whom Nicephorus had discovered a new title Πρόεδρος, at once turned towards the rising sun, and to the end of the reign of Zimisces maintained a firm control of domestic affairs. Indeed, it is suspected that the

emperor was suffered to reign and live only so long as he pleased the powerful minister; and it is clear that important tracts of public business were wholly abandoned to civilian control by an emperor genuinely interested in war alone. Under the reformed empire of Diocletian, Constantine, and Justinian, the civilian was always a match for the military element. While the historian depicts on a large and glowing canvas the valour of a hero, the romantic details of a campaign, the ordinary life of a people (still nine-tenths of a nation's history) remains without a chronicler. Only a Napoleon, perhaps, has ever strictly fulfilled the imperial promise, personal control over both departments of State, unrelaxed vigilance, and military enterprise. We can only conjecture dimly amid the tumult and flash of arms, what the early government was like during these chivalrous exploits. For twenty years Basil will retain unquestioned his grasp on public business; for twenty years there will be seen the same ambition of generals under the cover of a weak but respected legitimacy, the same cabinet-rule of an irresponsible chief minister. But for the masterful spirit of Basil II., the personal control of a Byzantine sovereign might never have reappeared; and after all, this was what a Roman emperor pledged, what the government needed for efficiency and the people for security.—The Phocas circle was broken up; the *Curopalat* Leo was banished to Lesbos; Nicephorus, his son, πρωτοβεστιάριος, to Imbros; Bardas Phocas, the second son, governor of Chaldia and Colonea, was closely confined in Amasia; Peter the eunuch was spared from the general disgrace.—The death of Nicephorus was the signal for a widespread movement among the enemies of Rome. The Russians, now lords of the Balkans, threatened to overrun the European territory of the empire: there was no reason why the Bulgarian people, mainly Slavonic, should not accept the leadership of the Norse princes

John Zimisces and the settlement of Bulgaria.

John Zimisces and the settlement of Bulgaria.

as their cousins had in Russia; the revolution had been purely dynastic. The Moslem powers forgot their differences, and closed in round an army without a head, as they supposed. But the defensive methods were still vigorous; Nicetas, a patrician and a eunuch, contrives to overthrow this imposing confederacy of unbelievers; Bardas Sclerus, Zimisces' brother-in-law, stationed at Adrinople against the Russians, issues forth and inflicts a crushing defeat, in which 20,000 are slain. He is recalled in haste by the news of a fresh danger, the invariable conspiracy of the Phocas family so recently disinherited. Leo and his two sons are discovered, judicially examined, and (an infrequent sentence for high-treason) condemned to death. John modifies the penalty to loss of sight, and gives directions that it shall be only formally performed. (Two years later (971) they are found again conspiring, are again betrayed, and this time the sentence is really executed, and their goods are confiscated to the State.) In 970 Sclerus, another conspicuous figure in the military caste, was sent to Asia Minor, where at Cappadocian Cæsarea he assembles his forces. In 971 John marches in command to the Russian war by way of Dristra (Δορόστολον); Peristhlaba he captures, and lays siege to Dristra, where two terrible engagements take place; in the latter conflict 15,500 Russians are slain, while the Romans lose but 350. Zimisces brings with him a special corps of devoted *Armenian* troops, who defend his person and assure the victory (we already know from Abulpharagius the value attached to these reinforcements of *Armenian* infantry, during the late Syrian wars of Nicephorus). After the famous interview of the two sovereigns, embellished by historians, peace is made; and duly supplied with provisions and safe conduct the Russian invaders, remnants of a great host, take their homeward path. Wenceslas is killed on the way; and his son Vladimir marries Anne, sister of the young emperor, and

begins that long, peaceful influence of church and court on the receptive Russians, which is seen surviving, strongly marked and unmistakable in our own day. John triumphs with one of those spectacular processions so familiar of late to the citizens of the capital; he divests Boris of his kingship, and transforms him into a docile, imperial official with the harmless title *magister militiæ*. About this time is abolished a vexatious impost, the smoke-tax, reinstated by an emperor of evil memory, Nicephorus I., in the early days of the ninth century, which excited perhaps much the same resentment as our similar window-tax. *John Zimisces and the settlement of Bulgaria.*

§ 9. The next three years are devoted to the East. The Great Domestic was nobly continuing the tradition, called by *Armenian* writers Mleh demeslikos, in which we must surely recognise Melias, the governor of Lycandus, or more probably his son.[1] He ravages Edessa, and takes Nisibis and Amida; after seven centuries the fortified towns of the debatable border are just as they were in the time of Constantius II. John now came up, having concluded an alliance with the *Armenian* kings, Ashot III. and the Prince of Vasparacan, and received reinforcements: there had been an anxious moment of uncertainty when he found the frontier menaced by 80,000 troops, who at first seemed reluctant to admit the Romans. The combined forces are directed against the central citadel of Islam. In Bagdad the feudal forces, everywhere prevalent in Europe and West Asia, had substituted for a direct theocratic rule centralised in the Caliph or Vicar of God, the turbulent rivalry of emirs. The acting "Shogun," Bakhtiar, of the impotent captive, had himself resigned to others the business of government and the defence of the country. The people, never voiceless at a crisis *John and the eastern campaigns.*

[1] Mleh, Melias, and Melissenus are perhaps the stages in the development of this patronymic.

John and the eastern campaigns.

in so-called despotic States, rise in sedition against this double indifference. Bakhtiar was alarmed, gave up his hunting and pleasures, robbed the unfortunate caliph, in spite of his protest, of his household furniture for the expenses of the war, and took the field. It would appear that this vigorous effort surprised and baffled the Romans; Mleh or Melias is defeated and captured, and the results of his brilliant enterprise are lost. In 974, John passes by Nisibis and Amida, proposes to sack "Ecbatana" (Bagdad), most inviolable and opulent city on earth; and after an obscure but successful raid, forces the caliph into a tributary alliance, which is operative some thirteen years later. He returns home laden with booty, and after a brief rest again proceeds to Syria in 975. He rapidly seizes Membig (or Hierapolis), Apamea, Emesa, Baalbec. He makes Damascus pay tribute, and leaves part of his army for the siege of Tripoli, part, under Burtzes, for the blockade of Antioch, which again capitulated to this successful leader after the death of Zimisces. If we can credit *Armenian* authorities, he wrote from Jerusalem itself to Ashot III., sending a present of 2000 slaves and 1000 horse; and honours the king's envoys with titular dignities, one Leo (a clerk) as "rabounapet" and philosopher, the layman Sempad as *magister* or *protospathaire*. It is clear that John Zimisces valued both the soldiers and the monarchs of Armenia. Sprung from a native stock, he felt in sympathy with the race rising gloriously from centuries of obscure oppression. The Armenian influence perhaps reached its height in these two regencies; and although it declines somewhat in the following legitimist reaction (989–1056), yet the fortunes of this warlike people were closely bound up with the destiny of Rome; and the short-sighted policy of Constantine X. (*c.* 1050) finally broke up an important bulwark of the empire.

§ 10. But in the moment of triumph and in the prime of life, Zimisces was attacked by deadly though lingering illness. In the autumn of 975 he turns his face homewards, and moves slowly through the now peaceful and fertile regions, which his family and his countrymen had once more annexed to the empire. The chronicler suddenly lifts the veil from the secret conflict of the rivals, which the din of arms allows us to forget. Passing through Cilicia, by Longias and Dryzè, he inquires for the owner of the prosperous but thinly inhabited country. It is Basil the chamberlain, and the soldier is indignant that the fruit of his toil and the lands won by the lives of brave men fall to menials of the palace. At the Asiatic Mount Olympus he lodges with a noble, Romanus, whom some affirm to be a grandson of Romanus Lecapenus. But there is little need of the story of a poisoned cup. Mortally ill he reached the capital, and just lived into the new year. On the 10th of January he died, leaving the young princes to the care of the minister suspected of his own murder. A strange version of the story comes from the East; Matthew of Edessa tells us that he abdicated in deep repentance at the massacre of Nicephorus, assembled the grandees (μεγιστᾶνες to the Greeks), and placed the crown on the rightful head of Basil. Retiring into a convent, he was poisoned by his butler and chamberlain; whom we scarcely expect to meet with in that austere simplicity of the cloister, for which several Roman princes had gladly exchanged a throne.—We have now reached the assigned limits of an important period. We see the Eastern frontiers immensely strengthened, as they had not been since Heraclius' reign. There is a firm alliance with the great Bagratid house of Armenia. Bulgaria, humbled to the dust, is a vassal of the empire; the Russians are no longer a menace, but are receiving gladly creed, customs, and even forms of government from imperial Rome.

Suspicious death of Zimisces (976).

Hidden conflict in the Roman Empire.

Hidden conflict in the Roman Empire.

The Byzantine State is the only one in Europe that deserves the names of monarchy or commonwealth. But under the surface of this prosperity are working tendencies and influences whose conflict will hasten the downfall of the empire. On the one hand, ambitious feudal captains, whose unique business and interest is war, who know nothing and feel nothing of the cost of military expenditure and the people's suffering; on the other, trained officials or palace favourites, whose ideal is a pacific and unadventurous state, who cannot realise the danger of a soft and vulnerable civilisation in the midst of hardy neighbours, and whose protests against the costliness of war are upraised in the interests not so much of the people as their own.

D. Abortive Attempts to revive the Regency: Personal Monarchy triumphs over both Departments, Civil and Military (990–1025)

The young Augusti: revolt of Sclerus (976).

§ 1. Public opinion without doubt, whenever it could be said to exist, predicted a serious conflict between the cabinet and the army-leaders. The death of Zimisces left every ambitious pretender in either sphere free to follow his inclinations under cover of service to the State and to the youthful emperors. The first act in the drama recalls the main features of the revolution of 963. Once more a minister, Basil, holding the place of Bringas (whom he had supplanted), attempts to remove a dangerous and popular commander; in place of Nicephorus we find the old rival of the house of Phocas, Bardas Sclerus. He was the obvious successor of Zimisces, as guardian of the princes and the empire; his elevation to partnership seemed a mere matter of time. The emperors had now reached the age of eighteen and fifteen, without learning any of the duties of their station. Basil the chamberlain suc-

ceeded in permanently imprisoning Constantine IX. in a charmed circle of palace-pleasures and illusions; Basil II. broke through this restraint and respectful mockery; he learnt life's lessons by bitter experience, shook off his sloth, startled the rival hierarchy by acting for himself, issued commands to his subalterns, and reigned in an inaccessible and perhaps joyless solitude.—The year 976, beginning early (Jan. 10) with a new reign, was destined to have more than its share of exciting incident. The Minister recalled Theophano to the palace, where she sank into silence and inaction; honoured Bardas Sclerus with the (now favourite) title of *Duke* of Mesopotamia, but detached him from the immediate command of the Oriental armies and the society of his faithful friends; sent Burtzes, with a similar title, Duke of Antioch, to govern the city he had recovered; and gave a captaincy to Peter Phocas, the eunuch, nephew of the late emperor. At this shower of favours upon the hated and powerful house, Bardas broke into open protest. Basil the chamberlain lets it be known among the friends of Sclerus, that if he had a grievance in the office to which he was appointed, he might retire and live quietly on his estates. Sclerus revolts, and openly seizes the regency. His son, Romanus, who might have become a valuable hostage for his good conduct, is adroitly convoyed from the capital and joins his father. With the help of Armenian cavaliers he is saluted emperor by the troops, and passes into the district of Melitenè, so recently regained. The revolt took on an entirely Oriental character; it was chiefly supported (as the Greeks indignantly realised) with Armenian contingents; and at one time it seemed likely that two pretenders at the head of equal armies might avoid the horrors of civil war by splitting up the integrity of the empire. Sclerus seized the public taxes and local resources. But he held the richer inhabitants to exorbitant ransom, and prevailed on some of

The young Augusti: revolt of Sclerus (976).

Asia Minor detached from the empire.

Asia Minor detached from the empire.

the wealthy proprietors to hand over their whole fortunes. He was now established in Mesopotamia, and thought it no disgrace to parley with the infidel and obtain their succour. The Emirs of Diarbekir and of Miafarekin join his cause, finding nothing singular in another ebullition of selfish separatism, which was then everywhere rife through the caliph's dominions. Three hundred picked Arabian horsemen join the rebel standard; and the camp of Sclerus is the haunt of bandits, and the centre and asylum for all the discontented. The Armenian auxiliaries include some notable princes—the brother, Romanus, and the sons, Gregory and Bagrat, of Ashot, Prince of Taron. The utmost fear prevailed in the civil councils of the Ministry; Legitimist generals who could be trusted were not numerous. At last Peter Phocas was sent to Cæsarea, where all available troops were assembled in the interest which we must call, by a stretch of fancy, the Imperialist cause. A *first* engagement ended in his success, and special enmity was shown to the Armenian allies, who were believed to be the motive and the backbone of the rebellion. Bardas loses a firm friend in Anthes; and finds the captain of the Saracen contingent openly advocating desertion. It is a curious comment on the times and on the character of the regent, that the band murders its "believing" commander and throws in its lot with the Christian general. A certain Saraces conducts Bardas safely through the passes watched by Phocas' troops; and a *second* engagement takes place at Lapara on the Armenian frontier, or, as some aver, at Lycandus. Peter, deceived by the ruse of a mock banquet and simulated doles to the rebel troops, is caught unawares and suffers heavy loss; while shortly after, Burtzes, the Duke of Antioch, declares for his old friend and ally, Sclerus. As his viceroy in a semi-independent duchy, he leaves a Moslem, Abdallah Muntasir, who acts with feudal loyalty (typical of the age) towards his friend,

Asia Minor detached from the empire.

but on the collapse of Sclerus' rebellion refuses to restore the city to the empire.[1] Andronicus Ducas (who may be a member of the ancient house by Nicolas, the one surviving scion after Constantine's abortive attempt) also declares for Sclerus; and the insurgent sailors of the port of Attalia seem to have joined with the townsfolk in putting their admiral in irons and hoisting the black flag. But this mutinous fleet added little to the cause of Sclerus or the interest of the war. Commanded by Manuel Curtice, it sailed to attack the imperial galleys, still loyal, stationed off the Cibyrrhæot *Theme*. Thence it made for the Hellespont, seized Abydos as its headquarters, terrorised the capital, and interrupted its supplies. But the next news we have is the tidings that Theodorus Carantenus has annihilated the rebel squadron.

Defeats of the Imperialist forces.

§ 2. Against this powerful confederation of the land forces the minister Basil despatched Leo (πρωτοβεστιάριος) and John the patrician. Constantinople had not known such a panic since the reign of Theodosius III. All kinds of authority were hastily heaped on the generals, not perhaps without the secret misgivings of the cabinet. They were armed with the fullest powers of treating with the rebels, or bribing them into submission; and at their disposal lay all offices and captaincies without reference to the ministry at home. The Imperialists reach Cotyæum in Phrygia. Leo fails in his efforts to detach the partisans of Sclerus, and succeeds better by an audacious manœuvre. Slipping past their lines he leads his men eastward, as if to retaliate (like Heraclius) on the homesteads and fields of the chief supporters of the war. Seeing their homes threatened, the army, Cappadocian or

[1] He is only won over to become an imperial officer by the clever special pleading of the Bishop of Aleppo (rewarded for this service with the Patriarchal See of Antioch, and losing his promotion and his liberty by ungrateful treason towards Basil II. twelve years later).

Defeats of the Imperialist forces.

Armenian, deserts to the imperial cause. Leo follows up this skilful ruse by a *third* engagement, in which Burtzes and Romanus, son of the pretender, are defeated; we shall find the repentant or renegade Burtzes, along with Eustathius Maleïnus, among the Imperialists. Once again the special bitterness against the Armenians was displayed; no quarter was given to those who were perhaps unfairly regarded as the prime-movers in the sedition. A *fourth* battle resulted in an entire change of fortune: Bardas Sclerus with his brother Constantine falls with his Eastern cavalry on Leo. An utter rout ensues; of the three generals, Peter Phocas and John are slain, and Leo is taken prisoner. Elated with this overwhelming success, the rebels march towards the Bithynian frontier, everywhere welcomed by the fickle crowds; the days of Thomas the Socialist have come back again. The government sends out Manuel Comnenus, first of the famous house to find a place in Roman annals, as commander of the garrison at Nice; at that moment he held the title of Prefect of the East. Feigning plenty by sand-heaps lightly covered with grain, he capitulates and retires to the capital with his soldiers and the honours of war, leaving behind an almost empty and famine-stricken town to Sclerus. There was now no general who could command the shattered remnants of "Imperialism." Driven to extremities, the government draws from his convent-retreat in Chios Bardas Phocas, disgraced some six years previously. The part of the two chief actors was now oddly changed—a Phocas was now the loyalist, a Sclerus the defaulter. So low had the fortunes of the central government ebbed that it was by stealth that the new leader effected a secret journey to Cæsarea, long prevented by the vigilance of young Romanus Sclerus from passing into Asia Minor. Placing himself at the head of the army Phocas retreats to Amorium, and is there met by Sclerus. The Imperialists are

Phocas (restored to favour) overthrows Sclerus.

again defeated ; and nothing but the brilliant strategy of a capable and humane general saved the flying and dismayed troops. In turn retreating and facing again to confront the pursuing rebels, Phocas preserved his men at serious personal risk from utter annihilation, with that respect for human life that is so marked a feature in this Byzantine age. Gathering together his humiliated forces he again offers battle, and again is driven to flight. In yet a third engagement Phocas fought with the courage of despair ; the armies watch the single combat of the heroic leaders. Sclerus is hurled from his horse, and the riderless steed spreads the false tidings of his defeat and death. The rebel army, hitherto victorious, but depending only upon the personal influence of an individual, was seized with unreasoning panic and dispersed in all directions. Sclerus fled to Miafarekin and thence to the caliph in Bagdad. So ends the first scene in the contest for the regency. His followers continue to harass the provinces of Asia Minor, like the Carlists after legitimate war in Spain. Lydia, Phrygia, and Caria suffer from their raids, and it is not till 980 that peace is restored throughout the peninsula. Before the second act opens, certain events had taken place in the palace and the capital which altered the complexion of affairs and shifted the balance of parties.

Phocas (restored to favour) overthrows Sclerus.

§ 3. A new and unexpected factor had appeared : Basil II. in 986 goes in person to the Bulgarian war, in spite of the remonstrance of the chamberlain and the open disapproval or ridicule of the military leaders. At first unsuccessful, he had not been deterred from continuing an active policy. No "legitimate" sovereign had commanded the troops since his namesake ; and even Romanus became a recluse when he assumed the purple. We shall again allude to this remarkable decision and the adverse criticism it aroused ; here we will only add that Basil scorned the interested advice of those

Military annoyance at Basil's initiative.

Military annoyance at Basil's initiative.

who would have kept the titular emperor a puppet. Issuing from his obscurity he learnt to command respect and even fear. While the sovereign was engaged in his Bulgarian campaign, Bardas Phocas had, in 986, crossed the Euphrates and seized Dara; the caliph retaliates on the region of Antioch with that familiar and purposeless foray which since Sapor and Chosroes was the favourite method of Eastern aggression. But Phocas must so far have succeeded, for we find the Emir of Aleppo paying tribute again to the empire with the caliph's consent. The news was brought to the camp that the emperor, not content with invading the province of the soldier, had disgraced the minister; Basil, on suspicion of a plot, was removed from office, sent across the Bosphorus, and had the bitterness of seeing all his public acts and decisions annulled by imperial edict. Personal control had once more appeared in camp and cabinet (987). Phocas had been annoyed that his aid had not been sought for the Bulgarian war; he believed himself indispensable. The military caste met at the castle of Eustathius Maleïnus, at Charsianè, in Cappadocia; and on August 15 saluted Phocas emperor, under the same circumstances and with the same motives that attended or impelled the proclamation of Isaac Comnenus just seventy years later. Almost simultaneously there arrived the disconcerting news that Sclerus, the former pretender, had escaped from the confinement into which the caliph had thrown him! For this baffled fugitive, taking shelter with his soldiers, 3000 in number, in Bagdad, had been first welcomed, then distrusted and disarmed; but had obtained the caliph's permission to attack the rebel Persians, and had succeeded. Instead of returning to a suspicious hospitality, he turned his cavalcade towards the Roman frontier in Melitenè, and was now preparing to renew his claim to the regency. The situation closely resembled the military anarchy of the third century. There

Revolt of Phocas.

Revolt of Phocas.

were the same well-trained army-corps, the same ambitious leaders or turbulent troops, the same honest and patriotic endeavour to do service to the State. Once more a Gallienus in the capital was confronted by rival claimants, who had first to decide with each other in open fight, and then seize the defenceless prize of victory. Sclerus got possession of Malatiya from Basiliscus, the patrician in command, seized the valuable equipment and resources of the provincial capital, assumed the imperial title, and began to negotiate both with the emperor and with Phocas. To secure a safe retreat in either event, he despatched his son Romanus Sclerus to Basil II., with a feigned distaste for his father's treasonable schemes and a warm desire to serve the genuine sovereign. Basil's nature was, at the outset of his public life, open, confiding, and clement; the young renegade (as was supposed) received a hearty welcome, and even became a principal minister and adviser. To Phocas, Sclerus suggested a partition of the empire: so far had feudal views prevailed in undermining the ideal of a single empire "one and indivisible." Phocas pretends to agree to this compromise, and suggests that Sclerus should occupy the further East, taking as his share Antioch, Phenice, Cœlesyria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, leaving the larger part of Asia Minor and all Europe to him. But a real understanding between these ancient rivals was inconceivable; at no moment was Phocas sincere in agreeing to such an accommodation. Inviting Sclerus to an amicable interview he seizes and despoils him; and thus does him the best possible service by removing him against his will from the dangerous competition.

Extinction of revolt by sudden death of Phocas.

§ 4. The curtain rises on the final scene in the drama of the pretenders. Phocas is seen marching on Constantinople (989). Half his army is sent on ahead to Chrysopolis, under the patrician Calocyres Delphinas. Basil II. at the head of the Russian con-

Extinction of revolt by sudden death of Phocas.

tingent falls on them, inflicts a crushing defeat, and then and there hangs Calocyr as a warning to traitors. In the camp is found the old, restless Nicephorus Phocas, blinded by Zimisces after a second conspiracy. Meantime Phocas himself is attacking Abydos; and Basil II. and Constantine IX. (his unique appearance in war) reach Lampsacus and offer battle. Once more the fight assumes something of the aspect of a duel in a tournament of chivalry. On his way to meet Basil in single combat Phocas suddenly turns aside, dismounts or falls from his horse, and instantly expires. His forces, held together by no principle but the precarious cement of personal loyalty, disband in confusion and receive a general amnesty. The principal accomplices are submitted to the painless indignity of a mock procession on asses, seated facing the tail; and in this lenient treatment it is worthy of notice and approval that Basil relieved Leo Melissenus from this light penalty, because he had in the rebel camp refused to allow injurious abuse against the rightful emperors. Basil had now triumphed over his most serious rival; but the fires of sedition still smouldered. Once again, for a third time, the aged and gouty Sclerus becomes the unwilling centre and focus of the malcontents. The wife of Phocas releases him from confinement in the castle of Tyropæum, and urges him to succeed to the undying feud with Legitimacy.

Amnesty and high honours to Sclerus.

But Sclerus was tired of the cares and perils of a pretender's life. His son Romanus was high in favour with the emperor. Basil, generous to a fault, offers him the second title in the kingdom, the coveted κουροπαλάτης, if he will resign all independent claims and resume his allegiance. The details of the interview are well known; and the whole episode of the civil war (disastrous though it was in its results to a wealthy and pacific State) leaves a most pleasing impression of the age, its humanity, considerateness,

respect for life, and good faith. But the mischief wrought on the real home of imperial power, Asia Minor, and on the provincials, was very great; perhaps it never really recovered. Feudal armies, warring for purely personal ends and in service to some great captain, are rarely bitter, and seldom fight to the death. The actual loss of life may have been slight. But the civil order and tranquil course of justice, on which the empire could especially pride itself, was thrown into confusion. Great feudal castles became not merely the meeting-place of the disaffected and mutinous, but the asylum of the fugitive villager. Vast territories held by magnates supported ten thousand head of cattle, but few independent yeomen or honest husbandmen. The horrors of civil war were experienced by the neutral inhabitants of the lower class; the conflict, half an exciting tournament to the partisans or "Imperialists," wrought real and lasting havoc on the resources and the population of the peninsula. Yet it must best be forgotten that such contests and crises are inseparable accompaniments of the Cæsarian ideal. The best man must be discovered and loaded with plenary powers, not as titular monarch, but as ubiquitous general, as personal administrator, as embodied High Court of Appeal. We have tried to justify from this point of view the incessant turmoil and wanton confusion of the third century, which Bardas and Phocas seem anxious to revive. They acted within their right, and according to their conscience. But the triumph of Legitimacy was a real benefit to the commonwealth. The wish to be ruled by the ideally best and most competent leads into hopeless chaos. It may well be doubted if the most able and virtuous would be the better for unlimited power or confidence; and it is certainly not worth while for a nation to take steps to discover this shy and lurking genius. Neither China, with her studious and democratic tests of literary aptitude, nor Rome and Latin

Amnesty and high honours to Sclerus.

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America, with the brusque arbitrament of the sword, provide that order, guarantee that security, which a government ought to bestow on its subjects. The hereditary principle reasserted itself at the close of the tenth century in Byzantium. Men were glad to obey a prince whose ancestors had reigned, at least in name, for a century and a quarter, and as some men whispered, longer. Basil crowned the public relief and approval by his generous treatment of the partisans; not merely did he decorate the ring-leader with the coveted distinction, but he took his followers into favour and preserved for them the titles which Sclerus had bestowed; this latter indulgence became a precedent for the next century.

Personal government of Basil II. (990–1025): true Cæsarian ideal.

§ 5. Imperial magnanimity could go no further. Basil at this epoch in his long reign kept all his vindictive truculence for the foes of the empire. A last echo of the regency conflict disturbed the oppressive silence of his later years without awakening his thirst for vengeance. In 1022, he had left at Constantinople Nicephorus Phocas (son of the pretender Bardas) and a certain Nicephorus Xiphias, both valiant commanders, while he is absent. Both retire in agreement to Cappadocia and revolt. An Armenian king Sennacherib appears to have assisted them, with that eager help always forthcoming for the house of Phocas from that nation. Basil will not waste the forces of the empire on a contemptible domestic brawl. He writes to each, promising pardon if he will rid him of his rival. Xiphias, already regretting his step, lures his companion to an interview and murders him. This is perhaps the only violent death by perfidy or judicial sentence that marks this age, if we except the summary penalty of Calocyr on the field of battle. The history of Byzantium is in this respect a welcome contrast to the cruel series of deaths which East or West of this humane area forms the staple interest of the historian.—We have no intention of closely following Basil II. in his Bulgarian

campaigns of nearly forty years. That task has already been performed by competent historians, and is well within the scope and power of any painstaking military chronicler and tactician. Still it would be unfair for the constitutional theorist to pass it by altogether, like Psellus, who devotes much space to a lengthy account of the pretenders and dismisses the military achievement of the legitimate prince with an airy periphrasis. For the Bulgarian wars account both for the success and the failure of the "Macedonian" dynasty.

Personal government of Basil II. (990–1025): true Cæsarian ideal.

It was the costliness of these expeditions which forced Basil II., now the "government," into an oppressive fiscal policy, which provoked a strong resentment and at a fitting moment produced violent reaction. Among the later emperors, he stands out as a unique and masterful spirit, accepting seriously the impracticable rôle of Cæsarism, as "earthly providence" or "present deity" to subject millions. The autocratic power of a generalissimo he learnt to exercise in his tireless campaigns; and he transported the peremptory tone and methods of the camp into the cabinet. We shall have occasion to inquire what were the changes in *civil* and *military* administration under this longest of Byzantine reigns; and it will be impossible to separate the austere lessons of foreign warfare from the modification of system and principles in both these departments. An effective personal monarchy is the rarest phenomenon in all history; there being but one still rarer and more miraculous, an efficient and harmonious democracy. The line of Roman emperors supplies by far the greater number of instances. The whole temper and tradition of the Orient hinders the realisation of this ideal; and except in the early days of a military dynasty and under the eyes of its founder, no one is so ignorant or innocent of affairs as the master of all lives and all estates. Feudalism and the modern expedient of constitutional compromise

Rare phenomenon; effective control of one.

Rare phenomenon; effective control of one.

has hitherto always tempered the direct authority of the central ruler or government by a number of jealous rivals; political life becomes a resultant of many forces not easy to predict; it is always safe to reduce by one-half the nominal power enjoyed by a military dictator or a premier with an unparalleled majority. The Teutonic spirit (which has alone made progress in the ideal of politics) is usually "against the government," and popular nominees are the last people in the world to enjoy the full confidence of the nation. The dignified and spectacular side of a Byzantine sovereign's life and duties detracted much from his vigour and vitality. He moved in a world of glitter and illusion, dressed and decorated for public display by obsequious hands, minutely regulated by custom and the bond-slave of precedent. Yet how many shook off the sloth and futility of this laborious splendour! Basil II. quitted the court; and surrendered its fancied pleasures to Constantine. His aim was to realise the Cæsarian ideal. He would be sole master; for to this office was he born. He may have owed his clemency toward traitors to an absolute and fatalistic trust in Providence, which had so often overthrown his domestic foes. He did not believe it would fail him; and he could afford to be generous, where a Tiberius or a Domitian was filled with alarm. But the genuine claims of Basil II. to the autocrat's title were deceptive and transitory; even he was sometimes the victim of the obscure guile of his nameless ministers; and on his death the court came to a silent but resolute decision to limit sovereign power by every possible means. The history of the remaining fifty-six years within our prescribed period will prove a striking comment on the vanity of human will. It will teach us this lesson,—according to our temperament and creed, a comfort or a disappointment,—that no one has less real power than an absolute ruler.

Overthrow of New Bulgaria in the West.

§ 6. On the death of the dreaded Zimisces, the Bulgarian race took heart. Four leaders presented themselves as champions of the nationalist movement,—sons of a late dignitary who had stood very near the throne. Of these David and Moses are soon killed ; and Aaron is murdered by Samuel, sole survivor of this strangely scriptural family, together with all his children except Ladislas and Alusianus. Samuel, the Shishmanid, unlike his Old Testament namesake, becomes king, and on occasion of the civil war (976–981) is found established in South Macedonia and in Thessaly, the hapless regions open throughout Byzantine history to any herd of adventurous savages. He penetrates to Dalmatia on the west, and to Peloponnesus on the south, where he occupies the important station of Larissa. Basil takes the field in person and lays siege to Sardica (Triaditza). He is induced to return hurriedly by the slanderous rumour that Leo Melissenus was meditating defection. Samuel falls upon his line in retreat, inflicts serious loss and captures the baggage. Basil found Leo entirely innocent of the charge, and waiting quietly at his post. Contostephanus, his informer, tried to brazen out the accusation ; and Basil, losing all patience, attacked him with brutal vigour, but beyond this imperial chastisement inflicts no further penalty on the author of a calumnious slander and a disgraceful defeat.—The *second* expedition was undertaken in 995 or 996. The Bulgarians were still ravaging Thrace and Macedonia. Basil fixed the headquarters of the war in Thessalonica ; repairing the defences of this second city in Europe, now fully recovered from its capture and sack in the reign of Leo VI. The command of the garrison was given to Gregory the Taronite, a member of that loyal Armenian nobility who surrendered lands to the empire in exchange for official title and dignity at court. Indeed, the prominence of this nationality gave rise to a singular

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and incredible legend, to be found in Asolik,—that Samuel the Bulgarian leader was in truth an Armenian prince, accepted by the rebels as their king on the defeat and capture of Curt. The *third* campaign (996) was mostly conducted by lieutenants; the *fourth*, in 999, found the emperor in person at Philippopolis; in 1000, his general, Theodorocanus, penetrated into Old Bulgaria and reduced Pliscova and Peristhlaba; Xiphias, who accompanied him, was the same as the conspirator two-and-twenty years later. From 1001 to 1014 the war languished; and the emperor was continually at the front in the east. It was during the stubborn resistance of the despairing Bulgarians that the lonely emperor became stern and reticent, parsimonious and autocratic. The details of the *fifth*, *sixth*, and *seventh* campaigns belong to the historian: Samuel died in 1014; opposition under Ladislas was finally broken in 1018; and Basil II. celebrated perhaps the last of ancient Roman triumphs in 1019. The recovery of the Danubian frontier had been gained at tremendous cost of happiness, civilisation, and human life. The wars of Belisarius had made Italy a scene of desolation; and Justinian had exhausted his rich Oriental provinces to reign over a desert in the West. For the relentless policy of his successor there is more excuse. No vanity or mere political sentiment prompted an emperor to consolidate that broken and incoherent territory, which from the time of Heraclius to the present day presents us with a variegated spectacle, and a political problem of unceasing anxiety. He attempted an impossible task. The Balkan and the Italian peninsulas are natural outlets into which the vagrant nomads drained. Teuton, Slav, Finn, Magyar settled in the latter, not in the compact and solid mass of an invading host, but in intermittent forays, and built up gradually and without purpose or design the several strata of race and nationality. The unifying and centralising

policy of Basil II. had been anticipated in sheer self-defence under the regency of Zoe; her great-grandson preferred safety and uniformity at home to all the Asiatic triumphs of the knight-errants. Yet the Byzantine system of government and taxation was unsuitable either to the Italians under Narses, or to the Bulgars and Serbs under governors sent out by Basil and his successors. It is vain perhaps to waste regrets on past political mistakes; and still more is it impertinent to offer advice from the study to statesmen and warriors, acting under stress of necessity and without knowledge of the future. Yet an absolute and uniform centralisation was never an integral part of the early imperial ideal. We ask if the complete overthrow of the dynasty of Theodoric or of Samuel was demanded by the State's welfare, if vassal kingdoms might not have maintained that pleasant federal diversity and local privilege and autonomy, which, for example, is to be seen to-day in different measures in the United States, in India, and in Germany.

Overthrow of New Bulgaria in the West.

§ 7. We come now to the last and gravest question—the place and influence of Basil II. in the development of political theory and practice. What changes did he effect in the civil or military order? What legacy of strength or weakness did he bequeath to his house, destined still to reign for over thirty years? Character, early training, and the sharp lessons of political experience, made Basil what he was. Forced into the background and kept in tutelage, he had broken his fetters by sheer force of will, and triumphed over all competitors. He stood absolutely alone; he trusted no one; his counsels were his own; and his word was law. He won this commanding and isolated vantage-ground by success in war. He was a great captain, and his subjects feared and respected his unflagging work and joyless life. He had secured the mastery in his own house by the removal of his namesake, long

Masterful spirit and reserve of Basil: change in the methods of government.

Masterful spirit and reserve of Basil: change in the methods of government.

recognised as holding an official position second only to the emperors', and far surpassing theirs in weight. The chamberlain had no successor; Basil, unlike many great rulers, rarely fell under the insidious intrigue of valets and placemen. Rough, loyal, and often quite unintelligent emissaries carried abroad the abrupt mandates of the emperor. He had no confederates in the art or conspiracy of government. He never lost control or vigilant watch over himself. Constantine IX. after one valorous appearance in the field against a pretender, sank into the not unmanly ease of a Byzantine gentleman. Basil never forgot that he was the emperor; his were no pleasant intervals of leisure, when among friends and equals the sovereign could forget his cares and dignity. For forty years he worked alone; and the brief and precise military orders become the model of all cabinet instruction in the eleventh century.

The Policy of Basil II.

According to Psellus (whose work deserves, and I hope may receive, from me a more detailed treatment than is possible here), Sclerus published to the emperor the secret of absolute monarchy, how the central power may be kept free from sedition (ὅπως ἂν ἀστασίαστος εἴη)—"Abolish the great appointments (ὑπερόγκους ἀρχὰς) and keep the supplies down during the campaigns" (μηδένα τῶν ἐν στρατείαις ἐᾶν πολλῶν εὐπορεῖν). The other wonderful secrets are more apocryphal: (1) To wear men down by unjust exactions that they may devote all their anxious time to their own households; (2) not to marry a wife or bring a woman to the palace; (3) not to be open to any counsellor, but allow very few to know of the imperial projects. From this moment, it was said, Basil changed his policy. He reigned alone, and drew the plan of the campaigns: the political class he ruled not according to precedent and written law, but his own will; to men of letters (the Chinese *Literati* of Tsin-Hwang-Ti) he paid no heed, and altogether despised them (τὸ Πολιτικὸν οὐ πρὸς τοὺς γεγραμμένους νόμους ἀλλὰ πρὸς τοὺς ἀγράφους τῆς αὐτοῦ

εὐφυεστάτης ἐκυβέρνα ψυχῆς). When the barbarian was tamed, he then began to reduce his own subjects, destroy feudal inequality and privilege (τὰ προὔχοντα τῶν γενῶν καθελὼν κ. εἰς ἴσον τοῖς ἄλλοις καταστήσας). He surrounded himself with a faithful band of servitors, neither clever nor well-born, who alone shared his secrets: (τινα λογάδα περὶ αὐτὸν πεποιηκὼς ἀνδρῶν, οὔτε τὴν γνώμην λαμπρῶν οὔτε μὴν ἐπισήμων τὸ γένος . . . τούτοις τὰς βασιλείους ἐπιστολὰς ἐνεχείρισε κ. τῶν ἀπορρήτων κοινωνῶν διετέλει). (Cf. *Constantine IX.*, § 3; *Romanus III.*, § 18; *Constantine X.*, §§ 29 (a good passage), 80, 134 (the famous phrase: "Our political rulers are not Pericles or Themistocles, but some miserable Spartacus of the household"); *Theodora*, § 1.) *Cf.* in *Michael V.*, § 36: τὸ μὲν γένος οὐχ Ἕλληνα, which explains a good deal of the feeling against the new official class. I may perhaps be pardoned for dismissing in somewhat summary fashion the great exploits of Basil II., on which a flood of new light has lately been thrown by a more careful inquiry into the oriental authorities; for (1) I am preparing a history of this reign in detail under the kind encouragement of Professor Bury; and (2) for our present purpose, which is mainly constitutional, this new evidence does not alter the general aspect of affairs or the relation of parties in the State.

Masterful spirit and reserve of Basil: change in the methods of government.

CHAPTER X

"LEGITIMATE" ABSOLUTISM, OR CONSTANTINE IX. AND HIS DAUGHTERS (1025–1056)

A. JOHN THE PAPHLAGONIAN, OR THE CABAL OF THE UPSTARTS (1025–1042)

Reign of Constantine IX.: his indolent and capricious temper.

§ 1. WITH the death of Basil the obscurity lifts; the history of the next half-century is voluble and explicit. The revived Attic of Psellus gives us the record of an eye-witness, and indeed an agent. After Basil's masterful consolidation there is a certain lull in foreign affairs, which allows us to catch the whispers of court-intrigues and trace the secret motives of revolution. The personal monarchy he bequeathed with unabated prerogative to his brother. Who were the ministers or satellites of Basil? History is silent as to their virtues or their influence. He preferred dutiful subalterns to frank partners or wise counsellors. With the turn into the eleventh century the atmosphere changes; old titles disappear. Constantine IX., like Claudius of old, brings to the administration of an empire the servants of his household. Three valets compose his cabinet. Nicolas is Great Chamberlain and captain of the guard; Nicephorus is Master of the Robes (πρωτοβεστιάριος); Symeon, a third, commander of the night-watch—all three decorated with the title πρόεδρος, which Nicephorus II. had invented some sixty years before for Basil, son of Romanus. Eustathius took charge of the Foreign Legion: the recent honour of a dukedom was given to Spondylas, a eunuch, at Antioch; to Nicetas, a Pisidian, in Iberia. We have little knowledge of the ordinary

officials, captains, or judges, who may have held functions of defence or administration in the *themes;* but it is clear that this division was dwindling in interest, whether as basis of military defence or civil jurisdiction. To the short reign of Constantine belong all the familiar features of a thriftless and dissolute reaction against militarism. For sixty years actual civil war or foreign campaigns had monopolised attention. The arts or enjoyments of peace were forgotten. Yet Constantine was too old to enjoy, too ignorant to be the Mæcenas of a brilliant and pacific reign. He was determined not to engage the empire in conflict; he had the same nervous aversion to the sight of arms as James I. He had been despised by the rough followers of his brother; and he hastened to retaliate on every real or fancied affront. Taxes he collected twice by an unfair method of reckoning; peace he purchased from the barbarians, rather than risk the peril of a popular general; the treasury he exhausted by pensions and palace-waste. He was as fond of ordering hasty punishments as Michael III.: he sometimes listened to protest at the moment, was grateful afterwards for such interference, and often wept over the blind victims of his suspicions. Constantine, son of Burtzes, the hero of Antioch, lost his sight. Nicephorus Comnenus, governor of Vaspuracan, suffered the same on a charge of treason, because he had bound his mutinous troops by oath not to desert him. The same treatment befell the scions of the old turbulent families—Bardas Phocas, a patrician; and Basil, son of Romanus Sclerus, both grandsons of the old pretenders. The latter was a type of the new feudal nobility, who are by turns a defence and menace to a free State. He had married the sister of Romanus Argyrus, afterwards emperor, and he challenged the governor of Galatia to the first duel or single combat in Byzantine history. It is difficult to believe that the actors in

Reign of Constantine IX.: his indolent and capricious temper.

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this strange scene still called themselves Romans. Prusianus, a Roman governor, is also a son of a Bulgarian king Ladislas, the late enemy of the empire: Sclerus is a rich and independent nobleman, member of an attainted family, which in any other kingdom or people would have been wiped out or reduced to poverty: the emperor is an old dotard of long descent but doubtful race, who may have been a Slav, a Macedonian, or an Armenian. Still his action in this instance is modern and commendable; he forbade the duel, and confined the two in different isles of the Propontis until their bellicose temper cooled. Sclerus was blinded soon after. The general control of the empire seems to have been held in firm hands; it was long before the ignorance or trivial preoccupations of the palace corrupted the imperial tradition. A revolt in Naupactus, which closed by the murder of the governor Morogeorge, was summarily punished, and the bishop lost his sight, though he loudly protested his innocence. Diogenes, governor (perhaps duke) of Sirmium, compelled the invading Patzinaks to repass the boundary-river. The two governors of Chios and Samos, and George Theodorocanus, assail a marauding fleet of Saracen privateers in the Cyclades, capture twelve vessels, and scatter the rest. Such is the brief and scanty tale of public events in the reign of Constantine IX. His chief anxiety was to secure a partner for his heiress. Eudocia, marked with the small-pox, had concealed her infirmity in a convent; though she could look back on the romantic alliance proposed with Otto III., her first cousin: Zoe had reached the mature age of forty-eight without a husband, through the neglect of Basil II., her stern uncle; and Theodora was in every way better suited for the conventual life, whence she issued in dignified majesty at any crisis in the State, to assume control of the Roman world.

§ 2. The choice of Constantine fell upon a member of the distinguished family of Argyrus. The first envoys had been despatched to the East. Constantine Dalassenus (=of Thalassa), a typical country magnate on the confines of Armenia, was the first candidate for the hand of a princess bringing an empire as her dowry; but Symeon, third in rank of the powerful valets, took hasty measures to stop the envoys or to delay the departure of Dalassenus by a peremptory message. The wife of Romanus retired to make room for a nobler alliance; and Theodora having declined a marriage with the husband of a living and blameless wife, gave way to her sister Zoe. For the next thirty years the centre of the stage is occupied by the three husbands of this princess. It is worthy of note that the courtiers grumbled at this step, and tried to discover canonical reasons, more valid in the eyes of the Greek Church than the survival of the first wife, why the ceremony should not be solemnised. Their objections were overruled; the marriage of Zoe and Romanus took place; and Constantine expired on November 19, 1028, having ruled alone less than three years.— Romanus Argyrus, sprung from a family illustrious since the reign of Michael III. (*c.* 850), was a typical Byzantine noble in an age when orderly government, regular training, and civilised institutions were perhaps strictly confined to the empire and the emirate of Cordova. He desired that the subject-class should enjoy the blessings of security which the conquests of Basil II. seemed to guarantee. The accumulated stores of treasure were now opened for the benefit of all. Fiscal burdens were lightened without any impoverishment of central resources, and for forty years the commonwealth was luxurious without being weak. Romanus III. reduced the impost of ἀλληλέγγυον, and extended the alleviation to every part of the vast realm. He released debtors, and paid off from the privy purse not

Romanus Argyrus and his Paphlagonian bailiff.

Romanus Argyrus and his Paphlagonian bailiff.

merely their arrears to the State, but their private obligations. His own brother-in-law, Basil Sclerus, received the office or title of *Curopalat*, and lost his dignity and is punished with exile on account of a plot some time later. The new emperor recalled Xiphias, the rebel of 1022, from his conventual retreat; but accustomed to the peace of the cloister, he goes to the monastery of Studium of his own free-will. The invariable conspiracy soon broke the monotony of court life. Prusianus, the duellist of the preceding reign, suffers the penalty of blindness, like his rival, and Mary, his mother, is expelled from the palace. Constantine Diogenes, nephew of Romanus by marriage, was suspected of treasonable designs. He had been removed from command at Sirmium to the duchy of Thessalonica, which made him general of all European forces. So powerful a man had to be treated with caution. He was sent to Lydia with a similar title and rank; but soon arrested, examined, and sent to the Studium, now the fashionable resort of penitent or futile pretenders. The following accomplices were chastised and sent into exile: two grandsons of Burtzes of Antioch, the governor of Achæa, and the Syncellus John. Within the palace a new and paramount authority was rising,—the influence of John the Paphlagonian. Psellus has drawn for us with fairness and probability the portrait of this remarkable man. For fourteen years an empire of hoary antiquity and immemorial institutions became the plaything of an obscure family of valets and eunuchs. The foundations of the power of John Orphanotrophus were laid firmly during the principate of Romanus III.; though the brothers only divided out the dignities of the State with scornful arrogance during the reign of Michael IV. It is a truism that the favourite ministers of a despot are the alien and the slave; but nowhere but in New Rome could such a sudden exaltation of a whole family be seen,

among powerful feudal interests and the not less important routine of the hierarchy. John, with Constantine and George, had been castrated in boyhood; a condition of preferment in the Church and in certain civilian offices. This condition formed no barrier to military command; and at this very time the eunuch Spondylas is Duke of Antioch. Michael, the future emperor, and Nicetas, were known as false coiners. John had been at first a monk, then private servant of Romanus, and on his master's sudden elevation extended his influence from the management of a household to the control of an empire. He became chief minister and confidante; retaining his monkish habit in a proud humility. Gradually he collected round him his four brothers; introduced Michael, the handsomest, to the Empress Zoe, connived at an intrigue, and in the sequel hurried on the marriage and the salutation of "Michael IV.," which gave a dull surprise to the indifferent populace of the capital. It is necessary to remember the careful steps by which an obscure Asiatic factor or agent secured sovereign power for himself, and the imperial crown for his brother and his nephew. An attempt was made by this gloomy but capable man to convert the titular emperor, no less than the rightful empress, into an automaton, as in China during the last half-century. There were thus three nominal or actual wielders of power: Zoe, in the people's eyes sole legitimate ruler, from whom all secondary dignities derived their credentials; Romanus III. (and later, Michael IV.), who enjoyed a transient supremacy in virtue of a lucky alliance with an heiress; and the real ruler, the "power behind the throne."

Romanus Argyrus and his Paphlagonian bailiff

§ 3. The policy, the character, the fate of Romanus III., were settled in the East. The fleet of the Duke of Antioch had been beaten by the Saracens in October 1029. Spondylas had before suffered a serious reverse at the hands of the Emir of Aleppo,

Catastrophe and humiliation in the east: lieutenants retrieve imperial failure (1030).

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and was completely deceived by the transparently hostile offer of Musaraph to build a fort on a commanding site near Antioch and assume control of the garrison himself. The fort was indeed built, but the Emir of Tripoli was invited to occupy it. In 1030 matters in Northern Syria were so unsatisfactory that Romanus decided to move in person against his recalcitrant vassals. Constantine Carantenus, his brother-in-law, went in advance; and when the emperor reached Philomelium in Phrygia, Roman pride was gratified by the humble offers of the infidel to resume payment of the tribute as fixed under Nicephorus II. Against the unanimous advice of civilians and soldiers, the emperor decides to continue the expedition which had already secured its object without a blow or the loss of a single life. An ignominious defeat was the result of this obstinacy. Baggage and imperial furniture fell into infidel hands; and after a long interval a Roman emperor was seen to beat a hasty and disorderly retreat. It may be doubted whether this reverse was retrieved in his eyes, or rendered still more galling, by the news of the brilliant successes of Maniaces or Magniac, and Theoctistus. The former recovered the larger part of the booty; and the adroit tact of the latter once more secured the suzerainty of the empire in Syria, and won over to a tribute and friendly alliance the powerful Pinzarich, Emir of Tripoli. The successes of his lieutenants completely re-established the Roman authority; but the prestige and the self-confidence of Romanus III. had received a severe shock, from which he never recovered. Abandoning to others the charge of affairs when he no longer trusted his own judgment, he became an austere and monk-ridden builder of superfluous convents and churches, ceaselessly pulling down and reconstructing on a new plan. Building may be an unmistakable witness to national wealth and prosperity; or (as with Nero, or Lewis of Bavaria in our own day) a sign of a

restless and unbalanced mind. Taxes once remitted to the subject had to be again imposed; and forced labour (something of a novelty in the empire) took the place of levies with the indigent class. Nature and the enemies of the empire seem to have combined to throw discredit on the administration of Romanus. The heart of Asia Minor was desolated by a greedy horde of locusts, which (if we may believe the story) rose again to life after a feigned death or slumber of two years, and once more began their depredations. Mœsia was overrun by the Patzinaks; the new Mesopotamian provinces by the Saracens; the Peloponnesian coast and the islands by African corsairs. Nicephorus Carantenus (of a family allied to the emperor) defeats this latter fleet. Such was the state of Lydia and Phrygia that the inhabitants fly to Europe to escape the horrors of famine. Romanus, with the uniform readiness of an emperor to become relieving-officer in general, gives to each fugitive a sum of money for the present distress; but refuses to allow a settlement in Macedonia, and encourages them to return to their deserted homesteads. When the capital was shaken or shattered by an earthquake, Romanus hails an occasion for the exercise of his favourite art; and rebuilds afresh the lazar-houses and hospitals. Yet it cannot be said the empire suffered serious hurt in this reign, either by rashness or neglect. The emperor chose his servants well, and in the remoter East rather recovered their lost ground. Magniac seizes Edessa, and imposes a yearly tribute of 50 lbs. of gold.[1] Theoctistus is able to win the gratitude of the Emir of Tripoli, by aiding him to recover his dignity, and in alliance, wins a great victory over the Egyptian fleet. In Bagdad the caliph trembled.

Catastrophe and humiliation in the east: lieutenants retrieve imperial failure (1030).

[1] Under the *Chrysargyron*, a "tax on industry" (abolished *c.* 500 by Anastasius I.), Edessa paid 140 lbs. of gold in four years: the sum, derived 500 years later, might speak therefore of increased commercial prosperity, if we did not remember that under the new feudal method the whole tribute or revenue was paid in a single sum.

Catastrophe and humiliation in the east: lieutenants retrieve imperial failure (1030).

In Percrin, a semi-independent emirate near Babylon, Alim the governor capitulates voluntarily; and when, repenting of his bargain, or wounded in his vanity by some slight, he endeavours to withdraw, the place was taken by assault and attached to the empire. Alda, widow of a king of Abasgia, gives up her realm (at least its defence) to Rome, like Attalus of old. The castle of Anakuph is made over to a Roman garrison; and in this case (as with the recent alliance with Tripoli) the goodwill is confirmed by the title *patrician*, bestowed on Demetrius, the queen's son.

The hasty marriage of Michael the Paphlagonian.

§ 4. The life of Romanus was drawing to its close. Ill-health was the lot of the Byzantine sovereign at this time, and especially of the husbands of Zoe. Her father, a fine figure on horseback, was not seen walking after he assumed sole control on Basil's death; Romanus, already sixty at his accession, rapidly broke up after his disgraceful defeat in Syria; Michael IV., a well-known epileptic, had to devise a hurried screen of curtains to hide himself from an audience, and he became at the latter part of his reign a neurotic and hypochondriac, bathed in tears and covered with shame; Michael V. fainted at the inaugural ceremony in 1041, and could hardly be revived by the strongest odours; Constantine X. was an habitual invalid, unable to walk and suffering agonies from the gout, which however did not spoil his easy and forgiving temper. Only the two princesses seem to have enjoyed sound and robust health. The idle and credulous, to whom history means the secret and anonymous memoirs of court intrigue, were as common in Byzantium as with us. It is difficult to believe that an age so careful of life in enemy and traitor should have condoned parricide and poisoning; or that rulers like Romanus II. and Zoe should have broken their amiable and lenient record by exceptional and monstrous crime. But there can be no doubt she was permanently estranged

from an ascetic husband, who regarded her with aversion. The hurried marriage with Michael (for which Patriarch Alexius was summoned in haste on the night of Holy Thursday) caused no stir in the capital; and Psellus himself witnessed the livid countenance of the late emperor as he was borne in state to burial. The right of Zoe to treat the empire as a dowry seems to be recognised; and open expostulation is heard only at the division of the great offices amongst the low-born family of the new favourite. Zoe has been compared to Catherine II., without her ability. But the society of St. Petersburg was indifferent or indulgent to the amours of the great German princess who completed the work of Peter I. The polished and inquisitive society of Byzantium looked carelessly on the marriage; and disapproved only of the change of government. Michael IV. was intended to be a pliant puppet, who would amuse the empress and leave business to an ambitious brother. Constantine Dalassenus, member of a well-known family, expressed in public his contempt for the gang which under cover of female legitimacy had secured control of affairs: on the curious pretext that he had stirred Antioch to revolt he was imprisoned, together with his son-in-law, Constantine Ducas. George, brother of John and Michael, was made *protovestiaire;* and Constantine succeeded Nicetas as Duke of Antioch. Stephen, brother-in-law of the Paphlagonians, was named general in Sicily in conjunction with Magniac; and his inefficiency and arrogance led to the recall and disgrace of this most capable of imperial lieutenants, and the loss of Sicily which had been won by his alliance with the Normans. (In this new feudal age it was only personal influence and valour which could keep together the mercenary armies who made of war an art; the old discipline and spirit had disappeared, which could do its duty even in spite of bad generals. Magniac continued in confinement until the reign of Michael V., 1041;

The hasty marriage of Michael the Paphlagonian.

and it is recorded as the single good action of this unhappy prince that he restored him to liberty.)

The anxieties of Michael IV.: adoption of an heir.

§ 5. If Sicily slipped away from the empire, owing to the incompatible tempers of palace-upstart and able captain, other outlying districts were in a ferment. The Saracens still attacked the south coast and islands of Lesser Asia; two admirals of Thracian Chersonese and the Cibyrrhæot *theme* (Constantine Chages) repulsed these raids with loss. The emir in Sicily allies with the empire, and his son is created *magister militum;* and a treaty is made with Egypt, and perhaps with Tripoli. Both Servia and Bulgaria revolt; Servia, subject since Basil II., had given trouble in the preceding reign, but had been reduced to submission about 1038; a member of the royal house escapes from duress and becomes king, defeating George Probatas (a trusted eunuch who had acted successfully in the negotiations with African emirs). He justified by his failure in arms the protests of the military caste and the careful division of the services. Meantime, the inner management of the realm fell entirely into the hands of John. Michael, like his predecessor, sought occupation (and perhaps atonement for a crime) in pious but costly building: his character underwent, also as in the case of Romanus, a complete change. He was devoted to lepers and anchorites; and even in the opinion of the sceptical populace was but little removed from a saint. Both Zoe and her husband seem to have earned no discredit or odium from the faults of the minister, who still preferred the humble title ὀρφανότροφος and the substantial authority of the empire. In the many plagues or catastrophes which distressed the land at this juncture, he was accounted the worst; the taxes rose, offices were venal, and the governors recouped themselves for the bribe by oppression. He endeavoured to secure the continuance of his power by effecting the adoption of another Michael, his sister's son: and this nepotism brought about his own down-

fall and the expulsion of his family. The health of Michael IV. grew worse; an heir was necessary; and Zoe might delegate or transfer, but she could never exercise in person the duties of sovereignty. She reluctantly consented to this adoption; but the emperor soon repented of his share in the transaction. His serious and melancholy nature was repelled from the fawning and insincere character. Michael the younger was indeed the sole type in our annals of the usual estimate of Byzantine ruler: and in the popular indignation which flared up against him alone of this long line, we may relieve the mob from the indictment of servility. The dying emperor expelled his nephew from the palace, and relieved him of the nominal duties of a Cæsar; becomes a monk at the urgent entreaty of his confessor, Zinziluc; and expires in his holy retreat and the odour of sanctity, after refusing to see the empress in her last visit of grief or inquisitiveness.

The anxieties of Michael IV.: adoption of an heir.

§ 6. The reign of Michael V. (1041–1042) was brief and significant: after this signal and unique example of a popular rising, no one can reproach the monarchy with its unrepresentative character. For a few days Zoe resumed the sceptre; but she found the charge irksome and yielded to the advice of John, to the tears and entreaties of Michael, who protested that he would ever reign first and most loyal of her subjects. A letter of recall is produced, purporting to be written by the hand of the late emperor; and she gives her consent to the coronation of the Cæsar. It is difficult to know whether a strain of madness did not enter into the new sovereign: his recorded actions are those of a purposeless ingrate. His own family he hated, as reminding him of the precarious rise of an upstart; and in the grandiose fashion of a Claudian Cæsar, proposed not the murder, but the emasculation of all his relatives. Constantine, his uncle, created *nobilissimus* (a title perhaps dormant since the close of the eighth

Loyal feeling towards dynasty under Michael V.

Loyal feeling towards dynasty under Michael V.

century), was a doubtful accomplice in his schemes. John was exiled to a monastic cloister, to muse upon his nephew's exercise of power. Alexius, the patriarch, is banished; and the Princes' Isle again becomes the asylum for deposed royalty; Zoe is transported thither, and her head is shorn. To the announcement of the prefect Anastasius in the circus that Zoe had been guilty of treason and suffered a fitting penalty, the sole answer was, "Death to Calaphates." The mob were on this occasion unanimous and grimly determined. The two sisters were proclaimed joint-heiresses and co-empresses, and Theodora was taken from her monastery to the palace. Michael, in terror, brings Zoe across and displays her at a window of the palace; but the people have but one single cry and a single aim. Constantine and all the guards defend the palace; but the indignant mob enters and sacks the home of upstart tyranny. It was a splendid example of that feudal temper which in Scotland drove many to certain death for the Stuart cause. Three thousand perished in this rare rebellion of the inhabitants; it is uncertain how the loss was apportioned. The tax-lists are said to have perished in the flames. Michael and his uncle escape and assume the monastic habit, and the Monday and Tuesday of this memorable week are over. Zoe now addresses the multitude from a balcony; and refuses the savage demands of the people for the penalty of death or blindness. But Theodora gives the order; and under the direction of the new urban prefect, Campanares, first Constantine with heroic constancy, next the emperor with shrinking and entreaties, were deprived of sight. So terminated a remarkable period. Since the opening years of the century, Basil and his brother had employed only rough sergeants or household slaves; a few curt commands had superseded the courteous method of consulting the Senate and higher officials. The bailiff of

Indignant populace storms the palace and reinstates princesses.

Romanus Argyrus as a private noble, had become sole responsible minister of Romanus III.; and the influence of John was only ended abruptly by his nephews' ingratitude and folly. The people, by no means, as we see, without weight or views, were patient under the claims of legitimacy, and resented nothing but the neglect of the rightful princesses. When the younger Michael showed the depth of his spiteful and hypocritical nature, they removed him with ignominy and restored their heroines in the only serious popular tumult since the Nika riots, five centuries before. The field was once again open for the choice of an aged and capricious lady, or for the intrigues of courtiers. The joint administration was not long possible. Theodora retired once more from the active duties of a ruler; Zoe sought a third husband, to support the business and the weight of her arduous heritage.

Indignant populace storms the palace and reinstates princesses.

B. Central Policy and Pretenders' Aim during the Reign of Constantine X. (1042–1054)

§ 1. The joint rule of the two princesses was dignified but brief; together they gave audience and conferred appointments; at least so far as by an edict, they endeavoured to reform the venality by which office had been secured under the upstarts. Constantine the *Nobilissimus* refunds a hidden store of 5300 lbs. of gold which he had diverted to his own use and future contingencies with all the caution of a parvenu. The Western armies were entrusted to the eunuch Nicholas; the Eastern to Constantine Cabasilas, patrician; and Magniac (already released from duress) was decorated with the title *Magister militum*, and sent to Italy with fullest powers and an undivided command. But feminine rule could not last long in New Rome. Never resented by the people at large, it seemed nevertheless unfitting, and

Zoe's choice of a third husband.

Zoe's choice of a third husband.

gave way to a regent-husband or to a new dynasty. Zoe proposed to the Senate to elect a new prince, and promised to postpone her own feelings to the public welfare in accepting their choice without demur. The option, after this protestation, lay naturally with the empress; and three bearers of the immortal name of Constantine were accorded an interview. Constantine Dalassenus (from Thalassa on the Euxine) arrived to receive a gracious pardon after a gratuitous imprisonment of eight years. He came in a very natural state of bitterness and irritation; gave advice in a lofty tone; and made no effort to conceal his strong disapproval of the late Paphlagonian cabal. Constantine Archoclines (? a title) is removed by premature demise from the tempting offer; and gossip suspected a jealous wife. Constantine Monomachus (husband of a niece of Romanus III.) stood next on the list: he had been banished to Mitylene seven years before by Michael IV., on account of his supposed intimacy with Zoe. Exile had not soured the complacent and amiable disposition of the new ruler. A swift galley conveyed the astonished suitor from a subordinate rank in Greece to the throne; and although Alexius the Patriarch refuses to perform the marriage rite, he consents next day to crown the united pair. Theodora lost by this event all direct authority, but continued to enjoy the imperial title and dignity and to reside in the palace. The short spring of the sisters' government (April to June) gave way before the summer or rather autumnal brilliance of the mature couple. Like an echo or grotesque parody of the old rivalry of the Sclerus family, Scleræna, a charming widow who had shared the exile and soothed the temper of Monomachus, was admitted to the capital, to the palace, and to the Augustan title. The arrangement might be said to resemble the special exemption of the French kings from moral restraint—a relic, it may be, of Merovingian polygamy; the *maîtresse en*

Anomalous relations of Monomachus and Scleræna.

titre held a recognised position by the side of the legitimate spouse of prudence or of policy. Scleræna was the daughter of Romanus Sclerus, and perhaps the great-granddaughter of the pretender Bardas. Her chambers adjoined those of Constantine, and were not far from the apartments of Zoe, who regarded the arrangement with equanimity or indifference: the disorder took on a regular and formal character, and was thus robbed of half its evil. Into these two twin reservoirs or receptacles poured the entire treasure of the empire. If we believe the partial witness, the palace saw a double ocean of waste, a double court of intrigue and venal office. The faults or infirmities of Monomachus were forgotten in the mildness of his character and the prosperity of his reign. For, however easy it may be for us or for Psellus to detect the unmistakable signs of decay and omens of coming doom, there can be no question that in the later empire this reign of twelve years was the zenith and meridian splendour.

Anomalous relations of Monomachus and Scleræna.

§ 2. The domestic history was diversified by constant plots and seditions, some serious, some humorous and half-hearted, but none (so far as can be seen) embodying any principle or genuine grievance. The setting of this motley drama is like the staging of a sovereign and his court in a pantomime. It is impossible to believe the actors in earnest; and the foolish but criminal impulse of the moment is rapidly forgotten and forgiven. (*a*) Theophilus Eroticus, once chased from Bulgaria by Stephen Boisthlabos, was now governor of Cyprus. On hearing of the downfall of Michael V., he conceived a design, by no means uncommon at the time, of securing his province as an independent sovereignty. To win popular favour, he posed as the champion of the people's rights; and was hailed as a liberator when he effected (or forgave) the murder of the finance-official, Theophylact, as a just punishment for the

Usual series of ineffective revolts.

Usual series of ineffective revolts.

rigour of his extortions.[1] The appearance of Constantine Chages, still *Drungaire* of the Cibyrrhæot *theme*, sufficed to end the plot: the people at once returned to their allegiance; and Eroticus, taken to the capital, was forced to disport himself in female attire for the delectation of the citizens: had Constantine X. (we may ask) heard of the mock penalty meted out by Julius Cæsar to the knight Laberius?

Magniac's attempt.

(*b*) In the same year (1042), Magniac revolted in Italy, and the cause of his resentment was a feudal quarrel about land. Scleræna's brother, Romanus, held an adjoining estate in the great home of wealthy landlords, Asia Minor: he profited by Magniac's absence on state-service to encroach or to annex, and finally to secure the recall of his provincial rival. Magniac revolts, and, assuming the imperial title, crosses with a devoted personal following to Epirus to attack the seat of government. Unlike Eroticus, he aspired not to a part but to the whole. The emperor, providing for a doubtful event, sent his mutinous lieutenant a complete amnesty, but despatched a strong force under Stephen the Sebastophorus.[2] In a sharp engagement at Ostrovo, Magniac is killed and his men join the imperialists; for beyond the personal grievance there was no cause and no conviction. The head of the pretender was borne in solemn state to the capital, and the splendid procession of the easily victorious troops was witnessed by the emperor and his two spouses. In reward for his attitude in the rising, Constantine creates Argyrus, son of Mel the rebel, the Prince of Bari and Duke of Apulia. (*c*) Stephen, so lately successful on the imperial side, now in his turn becomes a conspirator.

[1] We may note here the same rivalry of executive and exchequer as we observe in the earliest account of the Roman provinces, when the independent *procurator* watched or thwarted the responsible governor.

[2] This is probably a title designating those commandants of a quarter of Constantinople who had the right to carry the imperial image on State occasions; it was a coveted distinction which patricians might envy, but the wearer was subject to the control of the city prefect.

His design was to raise Leo, son of Lamprus, the governor of Melitenè, to the throne. Against this latter the whole resentment of the court party seemed to concentrate; while the ringleaders lost their estates and became monks, Lamprus was tortured and blinded, and died from the effects. It is impossible to assign any motive for this unprecedented departure from the well-known rule of Byzantine lenience. (*d*) The emperor's life was perhaps more endangered by a sudden popular outburst during a religious procession of the 9th of March 1044. Once more the mob, jealous of the rights and dignity of Zoe and Theodora, raised angry voices of protest against Scleræna, like the mob of older Rome against Donna Olympia under Innocent XII. He was threatened with death, and the tumult was appeased only by the appearance of the two aged heiresses at the palace window. *Various futile plots.*

§ 3. (*e*) Having weathered this minor storm, the luckless emperor found in the revolt of his kinsman Leo Thornic or Tornicius, a genuine tempest (1047). From this moment until the close of our period Adrinople becomes a troublesome centre of disaffection, justifying, as I think, two conclusions—a large element of transplanted Armenians, and a strong desire to vie with the Oriental armies in the nomination of the sovereign. It is quite as much from this revival of the Western battalions under Basil II., as from the ancient splendour of Philip and Alexander, that the name *Macedonian* acquired and retained a sense of "warlike," "noble," or "valiant," like Aryan; the Drakoi Hellenes of Mount Taurus bore it with pride, and its use survived as a honorific term for the mercenary troops of Naples or Venice. In the streams of Slavonic, Bulgarian, Servian migration and settlement, little remained of Justinian's warlike subjects on either side of the Danube (*homines semper bellicis sudoribus inhærentes*, c. 535); whole towns and districts had *Rebellion of Thornic and the troops of Macedonia.*

Rebellion of Thornic and the troops of Macedonia.

welcomed a new and peregrine population since his namesake (c. 700); if Philippopolis received its heretical contingent under the Iconoclasts, a colony of stout Tauric militia may well have thriven in Adrinople. The European towns of the empire are not buried, indeed, under the deep silence which in all this period hides the annals of the Ionian cities of the Asiatic coast; and their meagre record is at times illuminated by such a writing as the "Capture of Salonica" (under Leo VI.). The task remains for the careful student and speculator to inquire into the condition of the commercial centres of Thrace and Macedonia; and it may safely be predicted that whenever there is an appearance of new life and fresh vigour, it will have risen from some Eastern settlement. The armies of Spain, of Germania, and of Syria contended for the prerogative at the death of Nero; of Britain, Syria, and Pannonia at the murder of Pertinax. In the welter of the third century, there is a semblance of earnest purpose when each regiment believed its captain to be the most fitting heir to Cæsar. The provincial troops of Constantine decided the mastery of the world, and ended for ever the exclusive claims of Rome and her pretorians. Justinian had attempted to reduce the armies to harmless and occasional levies; but the civilian scheme of society broke down before the Heracliads and Isaurians, and the State was reorganised on the military basis of which the *themes* afford sufficient evidence. Chief amongst these were the *Anatolics* and *Armeniacs;* and for long these regiments were the arbiters of the monarchy, and their support essential to the continuance of a dynasty. But it must not be forgotten that the Balkan peninsula was gradually filled with a strange population; that Basil II. drove the frontier boldly northwards to the old line of the Danube; and that the new citizens, soldiers, or colonists offered a welcome counterpoise to the predominance of Asia.

Rebellion of Thornic and the troops of Macedonia.

And yet the chief and decisive element among the Slavs, Croats, Serbs or Bulgars was, after all, not European at all. Ghevond Thornic, or Leo Tornicius, was a popular favourite (perhaps a feudal magnate?) among the Macedonian faction. Their headquarters were at Adrinople, but they had their members and representatives in the capital. Tornic was a cousin of Constantine X. on the mother's side (ἐξανέψιος ἐκ μητρικῆς ῥίζης), belching forth the true braggadocio of Macedon (Μακεδονικὴν ἐρυγγάνων μεγαλαυχίαν). The faction is headstrong and obstreperous (αὐθαδὴς κ. θράσυς); and though now unused to the regular practice of arms, vulgar and lacking reverence for imperial dignity (*cf.* the πολιτικὴ βωμολοχία to Constantine in the balcony scene). Leo is removed from his dangerous friends to the dignified isolation of an Iberian governor. There he is followed by rumours and suspicions of his loyalty; he is recalled and compelled to assume the monastic habit. Constantine granted him an interview, but merely laughed immoderately at his altered appearance. The insult rankled, and Tornicius promised himself revenge. His clan, with the Macedonian faction, rescue him and carry him off.[1] With his company of robbers, Scamars, or devoted adherents, he advances to the walls without let or hindrance, and attempts to enter by the Blachern Gates. As Justinian

[1] Leo Tornicius was no aggressive usurper; he pleaded the commission of legitimacy (Psellus, § 102). The story went round that Theodora, now recognised as the rightful sovereign, had chosen Leo, τὸν ἐκ Μακεδονίας. The military faction could thus satisfy their faith to legitimacy, and their desire for an active regent. They trusted that the scanty forces in the city would join them, already angry with the emperor for his innovations. Anxious to see a soldier on the throne, they might take an active part in the defence of the State (δι' ὀργῆς τὸν Αὐτοκράτορα ἔχοντες (the urban troops) ἐπειδὴ κ. καινοτομεῖν κατ' αὐτῶν ἤρξατο κ. τὴν προεδρίαν αὐτοῦ δυσχεραίνοντες κ. βουλόμενοι Στρατιώτην ἰδεῖν αὐτοκράτορα σφῶν τε προκινδυνεύοντα κ. τὰς ἐπιδρομὰς τῶν βαρβάρων ἀνείργοντα). So on approach to the capital they ask the citizens to open the gates to them, and admit a gracious and valorous emperor who would guard and promote the empire (ἐπιεικῆ κ. χρηστὸν αὐτοκρ. φιλανθρώπως τε αὐτοῖς χρησόμενον κ. τὸ Ῥωμαίων κράτος τοῖς κατὰ τῶν βαρβάρων πολέμοις τε κ. τροπαίοις αὐξήσοντα).

Rebellion of Thornic and the troops of Macedonia.

in a similar crisis just 500 years before, the emperor with difficulty raised 1000 men, valets and guardsmen. Argyrus, the Italian rebel, now ally and vassal of the empire, recommends him to keep within, and not expose his person or his weakness to the disorderly rabble. Constantine sits on a balcony in full view of the invading army, in all his imperial panoply; he is mortified by the gross rudeness of the Macedonians, who dance grotesquely before him, imitating his gouty movements. He is menaced by missiles, and retires hastily. Tornicius missed his lucky moment, and gave up the enterprise in the moment of success. He falls back on Adrinople; he fails to reduce Rhedestus, which is kept in the narrow path of loyalty by the patriarch and the chief inhabitant, though a relative of the pretender.

End of Thornic: excuses for the military party.

§ 4. Yet the crisis seemed serious enough to warrant the recall of the Eastern troops.[1] They were divided into two; and part crossing at Chrysopolis, part at Abydos, the whole force converged on the disaffected region, completely enveloping the mutineers at Adrinople. Iasita, well known to us in his Armenian command, observed the severest discipline and restraint in this civil war. No pillage was allowed; deserters were welcomed, and amnesty given to all except the ringleaders. Tornic is gradually left alone with his faithful lieutenant, John Batazes; he takes refuge in a church, but is seized and blinded.[2] Pardon is granted generally, and the

[1] The people of Byzantium, turning war, like everything else, "into a joke and pastime," hastened to enrol for the emperor. § 112. *Πλῆθος πολιτικῶν οὐκ ὀλιγὸν, ἐθελονται δὲ οὗτοι τοῖς λόχοις ἑαυτοὺς ἐσεδίδοσαν, ὥσπερ τι τῶν ἄλλων κ. τὸν πόλεμον παίζοντες.* Nor were Leo's soldiers more serious; the whole rebellion was a jest. § 120. Only in a half-hearted way did they lay siege to the Thracian towns. The reviving prosperity of this once unhappy district (from Anastasius, 500, to Basil II., 1000) is well marked by these words: *Φρουρίοις εὐαλώτοις ἄλλως τῇ τε τοῦ τόπου ἐπιτηδειότητι κ. τῇ τῶν τειχῶν διαιρέσει, τῷ μὴ προσδοκᾶν πολλοῦ χρόνου πολέμιον.*

[2] John suffered with all the courage of an ancient Roman, and set an example to the unnerved and weeping Leo, like Constantine to Michael V. a short time before; he only remarked that "To-day the Roman empire will lose a good soldier."

stubborn who rejected all overtures are "paraded" with contumely, and lose their estates. So ended the most menacing disturbance in the reign of Constantine X. We believe it is possible to extricate a more serious motive than wounded pique or personal ambition. Like all rebellions then, it was a protest against the court and civilian government. Adrinople was full of dissatisfied members of the warrior caste, condemned to idleness; of retainers who chafed at inaction during peace, and grumbled at the niggardly pay during a campaign. Stipend and rations and commissariat were controlled from the centre; and some inexpert courtier, following the camp, was the real dispenser of the means and sinews of war. With the person of the monarch, with the claims of the dynasty, these conspirators had little quarrel. But they looked back to the glorious days of Basil, and contrasted the luxurious inertia of the court under the two Constantines with his simplicity and valour. It is possible that they refused to aid loyally in the foreign campaigns; not a few Roman generals have won their way to power by withdrawing support at a critical moment. And while there was no dearth of men and leaders in the Western army, the year 1050 was marked by a terrible and triple defeat at the hands of the Patzinaks. Either the court could not trust the captains, or the captains would not serve the court.

End of Thornic: excuses for the military party.

§ 5. At the turn of the half-century an obscure plot (*f*) again disturbed the sovereign's peace. A distinguished family united to overthrow him; it was detected in time, with the unfailing disclosure of most Byzantine plots, and the principal agent, a Nicephorus, was reduced to poverty and exile. It is possible that this is the plot mentioned by Psellus, when this person following in the imperial escort found ready access to the palace, stood at the door of the private apartments as if expecting a summons, and was discovered with a sword prepared to strike

Ludicrous palace intrigues.

Ludicrous palace intrigues.

the defenceless Constantine. The most ludicrous of all the court plots, that of Boïlas the jester, revealed the wonderful leniency (or fatalism?) of the emperor, and the absurd insecurity of his position. (*g*) Boïlas, an old servant of Romanus, was gifted with a pleasing stutter, which he took care to cultivate. He was the favourite of Constantine, who, after the storms of a hard life, looked on the throne as a welcome haven, and considered amusement to be the sole—at least the chief—duty of the sovereign. The constant plots published to every one the dangerous secret that fortune was to the adventurous; and, in spite of universal failure and detection, every one believed that he could guide his intrigue to a successful issue. Boïlas, a fool only in appearance and by design, adopted a clever ruse for securing allies and disarming suspicion. He approaches the discontented one by one, and either receives a promise of aid, or artfully congratulates the indignant loyalist that he has so well stood the test of devotion to his own beloved master, and promises that the emperor himself shall hear of his steadfastness. It was no difficulty to secrete himself in the imperial chamber; indeed, he would seem to have been the chamberlain at hand (παρακοιμώμενος); for a ludicrous story is told of his waking the emperor in the middle of the night to share his joy, because a dream had disclosed the culprit who had stolen his polo-ponies. He is discovered with a sword, strutting about the chamber, and seized it may be at the last moment with remorse or fear. Hurried off and questioned, he was subjected to a nominal penalty at the express command of the empresses, and soon restored to complete favour and confidence. The reign of Constantine was hastening to its close. Zoe expired in the middle of her incense and aromatic confections, in 1052, at the age of 74: Scleræna had been long since dead; and the uxorious Constantine put in their place

Clemency of C. X.

a little Alan princess, hostage at the Roman court, whose sole attraction (in the eyes of Psellus) was her ivory complexion and her sparkling eyes. The treasures of the empire were lavished on her countrymen, and galleys regularly plied the Euxine carrying the wealth of Rome to the outer barbarians. She was saluted Augusta, but the emperor dispensed with the ceremony of a formal marriage, and on his death she sank back into the grade of a hostage. *Clemency of C. X.*

§ 6. The civil ministers of Constantine call for a word of notice. His chief adviser was Constantine Lichudes, whose son we met in connection with Armenia. He was an excellent counsellor, but was superseded by the eunuch John, of base extraction, by an emperor whose chief distinction was his utter disregard of the ordinary rules of promotion. Nothing shocked the official world more than the caprices of autocracy. The civil service (as we saw in Lydus) expected the prince, to whom the whole popular authority was transferred, to be guided by the decisions of his council: he was "to ratify the judgment of the chief men of the State"; and, as in the Pekinese Government to-day, an emperor hearing with the ears and seeing with the eyes of his ministers was no arbitrary ruler, but rather an automaton, bound to subscribe with the vermilion pencil or the purple ink of the *Canicleius*, to the views of others; those, indeed, who fancy the modern expedient of Constitutionalism to be a wise novelty, being mistaken. Psellus in several passages deplores this indifference to procedure and precedent, and actually left the service of a gracious and amiable prince because his whims made every post precarious. The military regents had been content to leave much, if not all, internal management in the hands of lay Premiers—a Bringas or a Basil. But the emperor Basil II. (as we saw) was a martinet in palace as well as camp, neglected the honours and compliments due to birth and wealth, *The ministers, Lichudes and John.*

The ministers, Lichudes and John.

reposed trust only in the hireling, and handed on an Oriental method of rule, dangerous and unpopular in a State where the nobility was still vigorous and inured to war. The low-born John, with whom all government rested (as with a Duke of Lerma or a Koprili vizier), unwittingly repaid his benefactor by bringing upon him the crowning humiliation of his reign. This prince of the Senate and Grand Logothete suggested as successor Nicephorus Bryennius, general of the insolent Macedonian troops, while the gout-stricken Constantine lay dying. Theodora, hearing of this proposal, left her convent and proceeded with dignity to the palace, where she was at once accepted as legitimate sovereign. The emperor, hearing that his scheme was baffled, turned his face to the wall and expired, November 30, 1054.

Death of C. X. 1054.

Character and scope of Psellus, contemporary chronicler.

§ 7. The relations of Psellus and Constantine X. resembled in no small degree those of Claudius and Seneca ; and their respective characters were closely akin. Psellus has to explain in his history why he, a professed eulogist of the living prince, should narrate evil of him when dead. He adroitly explains and justifies his versatile pen ; and implores the "blest departed" (*θειοτάτη ψυχή*, "*cœlo recepta mens*") to pardon him for daring to dispel the illusion of his perfectness. Verbose, subtle, and unsatisfactory, he has graver faults as a historian than this vacillation in judgment: he has a rooted dislike to giving names or facts, and dismisses the foreign relations of Rome with a few pedantic words about Mysians, Scythians, or Assyrians. We turn with relief from his diffuse and vague account to bald but explicit chroniclers like Theophanes ; yet it is from his pages alone that we derive any genuine knowledge of the atmosphere of the court. He occupied a place midway between the civilians, to whom office was a mere source of profit and delight, and the military party, who still believed that patriotic duty was a stern task. He has learnt correctly from the latter

the parrot-cry that the armies are starved and imperial defences ruined by the peace-faction. But he could give no warning or wholesome instruction on government to Michael VII., the amiable scholar summoned by a supreme irony of fortune to retrieve the errors or avenge the death of Romanus IV. He is genuinely devoted to the house of Ducas; and it was this sentiment of affection that made him hostile to Diogenes. He disliked Stratioticus, and as his envoy undoubtedly encouraged Isaac Comnenus in his defection. He calls himself "friend of the Romans" (φιλορώμαιος) and "patriot" (φιλόπατρις); as if from a superior vantage-ground he regarded with discreet approval or concern the "Roman" administration, and its efforts for the public good. But he can scarcely be said to identify himself closely with the State; and his real interests are with rhetoric or philosophy, in which he was unhappily so apt a teacher of his royal pupil. For if he has traits in common with Seneca, he has also no little resemblance to Fronto, urging Marcus Aurelius to the archaisms of the lexicographer when the barbarians were already knocking at the gate. Evidently, though he can sympathise with the warriors in their desire for an emperor of their own choosing, his real grievance is with this wanton violation of strict rule in *civilian* promotion. It is the theme and text of his book; to it he reverts again and again; and it constitutes his chief indictment of the methods of government. We cannot understand who did the routine work, or who issued the necessary orders in the various departments of State. The permanent officials and secretariat must have quickly usurped control, as they do to-day in the short-lived ministries of a republic or under the sister constitution—an autocracy.

Character and scope of Psellus, contemporary chronicler.

§ 8. Though Constantine X. displays in his relations to Armenia much tact, good sense, and good faith, the general impression of these rulers (1025–

Indolence, courage, and fainéantism of C. X.

Indolence, courage, and favouritism of C. X.

1056) is that they had little notion of the serious business demanded of them. Zoe, to whom all the world deferred, had no idea of ruling, and no experience in affairs (*πραγμάτων παντάπασιν ἀδαής*). She became childish in her later years, was subject to sudden changes of temper—from grave to gay, from sportive to vindictive. With a dim memory, among her crucibles and pastilles, of her father's irascible moods, she who had opposed the just penalty of an ungrateful rebel, issued broadcast the savage command to deprive of sight: Constantine took care that these commands (as speedily forgotten as issued) were never carried out. She had the innocent vanity of Augustus; that the actual fire of her gaze was irresistible, and those who dropped their eyes, as if dazzled in her presence, were sure of her favour and tangible rewards. Psellus regarded her natural disposition as spoilt by the vulgarity of a court from which she never issued. Bent and with trembling hands, she had nevertheless no wrinkles on her face. Her unique preoccupation was to be free from care or business (*πάντη ἄσχολος εἶναι*); her sole employment (in default of any interest in dress or female accomplishments) lay in preparing incense for the divine service—half voluptuous, half pietistic. As for the easy-going prince himself (whose reign was the zenith of Byzantine success), he had no taste for hard work, perhaps little knowledge, and no bodily capacity. The most part of his time he spent in a recumbent posture, a martyr to rheumatic gout (*κλινοπετὴς τὰ πολλὰ ἦν*); if he walked, he was supported on the shoulders of two stalwart officials. Again and again, his attitude to the sovereign dignity is expressed in the feelings of a storm-tossed mariner who has made port at last, and will not be troubled any more on earth (§§ 47, 72, 79). At last he could breathe freely and take his ease (*ἀναπνευστέα*), and the business of government could be shifted on to some vizier (*ἐφ' ἑτερῳ̃ προσώπῳ τὴν τοῦ κράτους ποιεῖ*

Indolence, courage, and favouritism of C. X.

τὴν διοίκησιν). In one respect only, we are told, did he preserve a heroic courage in the discharge of his duties, in fulfilling the punctilious ceremonial of the court. In spite of intense suffering, aggravated by all this solemn trifling, he felt himself under a natural and covenanted obligation to give the citizens the splendid display, which had now become the chief duty of sovereignty (ἀπαραίτητα τίνα χρέα τοῖς πολιταῖς, § 128). Never, in all the agony which he endured with a brave smile, did Psellus hear a murmur or an angry word against Providence. In personal bravery (in spite of the balcony scene in the tragi-comedy of Tornicius), Psellus regrets that he fell below the standard of Roman worthies of the type of Basil II.: but he allows that he was quick-witted, shrewd, and gifted with a good memory (ὀξὺς ἀγχίνους μνήμων). Yet he was dauntless and unmoved in a crisis,[1] and paid little heed to the omens of nervous superstition (§ 96). He was by birth a member of that warlike nobility which sometimes served and sometimes excited the alarm of Basil II., who did not move easily among his peers, and had good reason to distrust their independent loyalty. Theodosius, his father, detected in some conspiracy (ἐπὶ τυραννικαῖς αἰτιαῖς ἁλοῦς), had bequeathed this imperial suspicion and rancour to his heir—an uncommon instance in our history of a son prejudiced in his career by a father's fault; for, as a rule, the sons of traitors are treated with conspicuous fairness and kindly consideration. He was called to no civil office or empty distinction, so eagerly coveted by courtiers; although his lineage warranted the foremost dignities of the kingdom (γένους ἕνεκεν . . τὰ πρῶτα τῆς βασιλείας). He loved pastime, witty com-

[1] In Tornic's revolt, his elder sister (Helena) entreated him to fly or take refuge in a church; the other (Euprepia), having encouraged the rebel, as it would appear. He uses the (Platonic) words of Socrates bidding a cold farewell to the weeping Xantippè—ταυρηδὸν πρὸς αὐτὴν ἀποβλέψας, Ἀπαγέτω τις αὐτὴν . . . ἵνα μὴ τὴν ἐμὴν καταμαλθακίζοι ψυχήν.

Indolence, courage, and favouritism of C. X.

panions, and landscape-gardening more than befitted a ruler (*βουληφόρῳ ἀνδρὶ*, quotes the classical Psellus); but, as many praised his disregard of the strict rules of promotion in the mandarinat, so there were found apologists for these amiable and innocent pursuits. Punishment he hated to inflict; and in his rare reprimands to defaulting officials he grew red and ashamed, modifying the penalty piece by piece until nothing remained; and even condoning the grievous and significant offence of peculation from the war supplies by a civilian (§ 170, *ἐπὶ κλέμμασί τις ἁλοῦς στρατηγικῶν διοικήσεων*). He became, like other exalted persons, the devoted slave of a petulant favourite, an outspoken lad from the gutter (if we can believe the historian Psellus); and was credited with the design of naming him as his successor (§ 179). He actually appointed him chief of the Senate (*τὰ πρῶτα τῆς γερουσίας*), or gave him rank with the highest dignitaries; and we are reminded of the urchin of thirteen who followed a recent Shah on his travels, and was pointed out as the commander-in-chief of the Persian armies.

His merits underrated.

§ 9. It is not altogether easy to reconcile these accounts of the emperor with the general character of his reign; and I am strongly inclined to think that his merits and his industry have been underrated. While titular dignity may have been lavishly distributed, there is no proof that the business of the empire suffered by neglect or malversation. Fickle in the choice or retention of his intimate ministers, Constantine X. was nevertheless well served, and the retirement of Psellus and his apprehensive friends may not have been a serious loss to the State. We cannot forget that in an age when the wildest impulse, grossest ignorance, and vaguest policy reigned supreme elsewhere, the Byzantine ruler, fixed and imperturbable against foreign rumour or domestic tumult, maintained his calmness and humanity. Except Tornicius, no pretender represented the solid

good sense and patriotism of the military caste; and discontent was limited to personal envy or to that general opinion that an emperor should be first and foremost a *soldier* (§§ 104, 109). Nor is it clear that Constantine can be accused of wanton and thriftless waste in the public finance; the charge is levelled indiscriminately at all pacific princes, and the pastimes and boy or girl favourite of the emperor might be somewhat costly or exacting. The "scandalous chronicle" of the palace would make him out an impossible dotard, surrounded and fawned on or hopelessly hoaxed by a host of low-born jesters. Yet Constantine X. was still the trusted arbiter in the last resort, the unfailing friend of the falsely accused; and he cannot be blamed if, while the vast machine of government moved on of itself, he took innocent diversion and reserved the initiative or the calm dignity of a sovereign for moments of real crisis. The tranquillity of Theodora's reign and the early quiet of Michael VI. may prove that during his rule of twelve and a half years the Roman commonwealth suffered nothing to its detriment from this most amiable and cheerful of its rulers. At most we must say (as we can say of all the Constantines in the eleventh century) that he lived before his time. His conception of office was purely civilian; war was a preventable episode, or a regrettable expedient. Affable (ἐκκειμένος πᾶσιν) and accessible, giving leave of absence to his chamberlains and guardsmen (κατευνάζοντες), he answered the remonstrances of his friends by saying that he was in the hands and under the care of a Higher Power, and needed no human protection. From the more visible guardianship of his people's love he was unhappily debarred. Loyalty (in our modern sense unknown) expended itself in a peculiar form in a jealous watch over the legitimate claims of the two princesses: there was nothing left over for the occasional and transient partners of Zoe. If we remember that he was a

His merits underrated.

His merits underrated.

coëval of Hildebrand and of William the Conqueror, living alongside of feudal anarchy and misrule in Western Europe and the Turkish forays of the Eastern border, we cannot fail to recognise with astonishment the modern character, proclivities, and policy of this ruler. Behind the mere lover of pleasure, ironically making light of the business of a monarch, there was another man hidden, a man of firm and dauntless purpose, steadfast clemency, and straightforward dealing; and if, in common with other critics, we place in his days the culminating point of Roman power, wealth, and territory, we cannot deny some share in this achievement to Constantine X.

DIVISION C

GRADUAL DISPLACEMENT OF THE CIVIL MONARCHY BY FEUDALISM

CHAPTER XI

CONFLICT OF THE TWO ORDERS

A. THE MILITARY PROTEST AND THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION: THE PEACE-PARTY AND THE SOLDIERS (COMNENUS AND DIOGENES), 1057–1067

Theodora and Michael VI. (creature of a faction).

§ 1. THE sole reign of Irene (797–801) had been the palmy days of eunuch-influence. The regencies of Theodora II. (842) and of Zoe (911) had not rested on their exclusive support; and Theophano (963) hastened into a second marriage with a member of the warrior-class. But Theodora III. brought into the palace the arts and virtues of a convent. Her claims to the throne, hallowed by the vicissitudes and afflictions of nearly thirty years, were recognised by all; no conspiracies disturbed her reign; and her household servants disposed of the vast patronage of the empire. But it is clear that she remained the mistress, and perhaps no female sovereign until Queen Victoria exerted at an advanced age a blending so judicious of administrative ability and moral excellence. When, in spite of the flattering promises of the soothsayer and the secret conviction of the empress, her health began to fail unmistakably, the palace-cabal of faithful servants (but indifferent statesmen) reasserted itself. They pressed on Theodora the

Theodora and Michael VI. (creature of a faction).

name of Michael Stratioticus, and perhaps hoped by the bellicose surname to delude the warriors into a belief that at length they had a prince of their own. But if Michael had ever served in Western or Eastern armies, history is silent as to his prowess or achievements; and his accession was the high-water mark of the pacifists. He was bound by a solemn agreement to do nothing in public affairs without the full consent of this informal council of ministers; and with an aged dotard, the cabal hoped for an indefinite continuance of power. The most liberal of Roman malcontents in early imperial days would have been stupefied at this condition, which fettered monarchy and rendered it harmless or superfluous—the mere disguise of a secret committee. At least, Cæsar was elected to act and to assume responsibility. He never became, until the accession of Michael VI., the creature of a faction. The tradition of imperial industry was still potent: Michael had to discover some outlet for his faded energy; and while an anonymous faction dispensed the money and honours of the realm (ἀρχαιρεσία), the emperor superintended the cleansing of the pretor's tribunal and issued "ukases," like Emperor Paul of Russia, to control the wearing of the hair and the attire of his subjects. I cannot conceive that it was the prince who replaced simple "intendants" for the usual dignified senators in the management of the treasury: it seems clear that the peace-faction were here at work. The Senate was still a venerable and important institution; its members might be imperial nominees, but the entire body had a creditable history for the past and preserved the traditions of an earlier day. But the Yildiz Kiosk was pitted against the Sublime Porte; and unknown menials usurped the power of responsible statesmen. To such a decree (rivalling the autocratic edicts of Basil and Leo VI.) Michael subscribed his name; but he was not its author. The sovereign was a slave, and

Theodora and Michael VI. (creature of a faction).

in vain he lavished gifts and doles on the Senate and people. He was despised and distrusted; and the discontented were prepared to rally round the most unlikely candidate for the throne. But the revolt of Theodosius Monomachus was a ridiculous fiasco. Claiming a hereditary interest in the purple, which his cousin had worn for twelve years, he marched to the palace with a few followers, crying out that he had been defrauded of his rights. He opened the prisons, as did the conspirators against Justinian II. (695); and finds his motley crew opposed by the Varangians and marines, whom the eunuchs had hastily armed. Unable to force an entrance, he betakes himself to St. Sophia, hoping that patriarch and people will recognise in him their lawful champion. Instead, the gates are shut against the disorderly rabble; and the pretender, deserted and at last a captive, lightly expiates his folly as an exile to Pergamus, one of the "dead cities" of the empire.

The Warriors slighted by Prince and Premier.

§ 2. The next conspiracy was neither contemptible nor unjustified: and we shall bestow some detail upon the successful protest of the military faction which transferred the sceptre to the Comneni from Colonea, and the distant limits of Lesser Asia. Psellus has left us a vague but precious account of a movement in which he played no inconsiderable share: and the curious may be referred to his text.[1] Michael VI. had shown a tactless parsimony in rewarding the warriors at the Easter Doles, 1059. This solemn ceremony of imperial gifts had been well described and perhaps derided by Luitprand of Cremona a century before; the emperor was still the unique fount of honour and of recompense. When the turn of the military leaders came, Michael was

[1] This entire period, with the account of Psellus, has been admirably summarised by Professor Bury in the *English Historical Review*. It is almost an impertinence to treat again of the events which he has described so vividly and estimated with such judgment.

The Warriors slighted by Prince and Premier:

profuse in compliments: Comnenus and Catacalon (lately recalled from the duchy of Antioch) were singled out for conspicuous praise; and the rise of the latter from obscurity through sheer personal merit was pronounced especially gratifying to the democratic emperor. But the coveted distinction of προέδρος was refused; and neither pittance nor title soothed their vanity. The faction, headed by these two men, illustrious and plebeian, now betake themselves to the chief minister, or head of the palace-clique, Leo Strabospondyles. They could not believe that his Majesty's slight was intentional; it was surely his purpose to show his appreciation of their services. It was both ungrateful and unwise to decorate the luxurious and pampered clerks of the bureaux and neglect the brave defenders of their country who faced death for the good of all? Again (and this time by a detested minister) the plaintiffs were dismissed with contumely; and the eunuch echoes his master's taunts, "What have you done at Antioch except pillage and oppress?" The leaders meet in St. Sophia, and bind themselves by a great oath not to rest until the insult has been avenged. Catacalon, the veteran and the spokesman, is offered the crown; but he refuses, and like Sallustius of old on the death of Julian, promises to be the faithful servant of their choice. In the end he suggests Isaac Comnenus; "for," he said, "it needs a noble to command nobles." All get leave of absence from the willing emperor and retire to their estates in Cappadocia, those vast domains which, whether occupied by palace-eunuchs like Basil (976) or by feudal lords, equally excited the envy and suspicion of the central government. As a last condition, Catacalon had insisted that Nicephorus Bryennius should be made privy to the plot.

Retire to Asia Minor (1057).

Hasty insurgence and failure of Bryennius.

§ 3. Nicephorus Bryennius, the nominee displaced by the prompt action of Theodora in 1054, had been despatched by Constantine X. with the famous

"Macedonian" troops to fight the Turks; for a prediction was going round that only Macedon could overthrow the East. But, on his patron's death, he had brought back his turbulent forces to Chrysopolis without orders; and Theodora, justly suspecting his motive after the trouble of Tornic a few years before, had cashiered and exiled the general. Michael VI. restored him to his command, and sent him with these same Macedonians to act against Samukh. On a modest demand for the restitution of his confiscated estate, the emperor replied with a homely proverb, "That one did not pay the workman until the article was delivered." Such was his imprudent use of satire, a dangerous as well as a contemptible weapon in the hands of authority. With him to report upon his conduct was sent John Opsaras, a eunuch of the palace, with the army-chest. We have a repetition of the behaviour of Romanus Lecapenus to a similar spy. Bryennius demands payment for his men on a higher scale than that sanctioned by the civilian war-ministry. When Opsaras refuses, he seizes him by the hair, violently maltreats and drags to his tent a prisoner, dividing the contents of the war-chest with the troops. Lycanthus, governor of the province (Lycaonia and Pisidia), advances to avenge this outrage, sets Opsaras free, blinds Bryennius and sends him to the emperor, with the story of his crime. Alarmed at this unexpected blow, the chief officers advance from their several homes to the strong fortress of Castamouni, the abode of Isaac. With gentle violence in the dead of night they hurry him away to the plain of Gunaria, where on the morning of June 8, 1057, he is saluted emperor, like any Probus or Diocletian of old, by the assembled troops, rapidly recruiting from the soldier-settlers of the surrounding district. Catacalon did not at once join the rebels, and caused them no slight misgiving by his silence. Indeed, he found himself in a difficult place; expecting an earlier movement on the part of

Hasty insurgence and failure of Bryennius.

Hasty insurgence and failure of Bryennius.

Isaac, he had written a daring epistle to the *Logothete of the Course*, Nicetas Xylinitas, in which he had openly hinted at insurrection. When the news of Isaac's "pronunciamento" was confirmed, Catacalon hesitated no longer. He raised 1000 men, kinsmen, vassals or retainers, and servants; and adroitly counterfeits an imperial order appointing Nicopolis as the *rendezvous* of all the regiments of the district for a new campaign against Samukh. This, it is only fair to remark, is a single incident of questionable honesty in a period to which is usually ascribed the bad faith, cowardice, and studied hypocrisy of the Greekling. The troops assemble, Russian and Frank, and the garrison of the *themes* Chaldia and Colonea (birthplace of the pretender). At daybreak Catacalon collects the officers, and gives them a simple choice between death and adhesion to the cause.

Catacalon joins Comnenian mutineers.

§ 4. At the head of these exultant and unanimous troops, Catacalon advances to meet Isaac. He in turn, overjoyed at this welcome proffer, leaves his wife and children with his brother John in the castle of Pemolissus (on the Halys), passes the Sangarius, and sets his face towards Nice. Michael VI., in the usual jealous fashion of a dual control by civilian and soldier, sent against them Aaron (Isaac's own brother-in-law) and the eunuch Theodore, who march to Nicomedia and encamp at the foot of Mount Sophon. Meantime Isaac has entered Nice. It is difficult to induce the two armies to adopt a resolute or hostile air. They fraternise and discuss the position amicably; nor are the Asiatic forces behindhand in proffering advice to quit the party of an aged fool, slave of his menials, and tyrant only of his brave captains. At last a pageant fray or tournament was prepared; and in the battle duly set forth on each side with centre and wings, according to the invariable custom, Romanus Sclerus is routed and captured by the Imperialists, Aaron and Lycanthus; Isaac (in the

centre) was turned to flight, and only Catacalon retrieved the cause of the rebels, by putting to rout Basil Ταρχανιώτης, noblest of the "Macedonian" phalanx, while aiding discomfited comrades. Radulf, a Norse mercenary, fought in single combat with a future emperor, Nicephorus Phocas (Botaneiates), and the perfectly tempered casque of the latter turned the mace and numbed the arm of the Latin. War was still somewhat of a "pastime," as in the revolt of Tornic; and but few of the opposing forces were left dead on the field. Revolutions in the Byzantine period were rarely murderous, and a change of throne or dynasty demanded few victims. The Comnenians enter Nicomedia, and are met by envoys from Michael, Constantine Lichudes and Psellus. The proposals would have revived the old and perilous expedient of the regency, or perhaps gone back to the ideal of Diocletian. A youthful Cæsar was to be adopted by an aged and childless prince, the one for the camp, the other for the palace. Isaac accepted the terms, stipulating (1) That Michael should crown no one else: (2) that the honours bestowed on his companions should be confirmed: (3) that he should enjoy the patronage in certain minor appointments: (4) that Strabospondyles should be dismissed. To this Michael agreed, and Leo was sent from the palace to his clerical duties. Everything looked favourable for an amicable compromise. But behind the scenes strange intrigues were moving. Catacalon opposed any concession: and the envoys themselves betrayed their master's cause by urging the mutineers to extreme measures. And the emperor, while promising in public to adopt Isaac as his colleague and heir, was at the very moment exacting a terrible oath from the senators never to acknowledge him as such. The patriarch Michael Cerularius absolved these reluctant jurors from their word, and promised the emperor a heavenly, in exchange for an earthly

Catacalon joins Comnenian mutineers.

Futile negotiations with M. VI.

Futile negotiations with M. VI.

crown.[1] They proclaim the Comnenus emperor. Michael VI., finding resistance fruitless, retired with quiet dignity to his own house and survived his downfall two full years unmolested.

Triumph of the Comneni: origin of the family.

§ 5. In this great military revolution there was a singular absence of Greek chicanery or refined cruelty. In Michael VI. alone was there double-dealing; and the envoys were no doubt justified in urging the refusal of the very measures they brought for acceptance. There was no violence, no outrage, no pursuit of the downfallen; and power was transferred from one party to its rival without leaving behind so much as the rancour and ill-feeling of a General Election. The new family came from Colonea (ὁ Κολωνείαθεν), and afford a good type of that unhellenic culture, pious, puritan, and warlike, which hailed from the East and could be referred to no indigenous source. It is true that a harmless fable brought over their ancestors with the first Constantine, who stood to the Byzantine pedigree-makers as our own William the Conqueror, a convenient and venerable fiction. We hear nothing of the family until the days of the *prefect of the East* under Basil II., and the name of the village Comnè betrays its feudal and rustic associations. His children, Isaac and John, were brought up under the eyes and by the care of the emperor; partly in the convent of Studium, partly in his own court, not less austere, like noble pages in an early Teutonic period or in later chivalry. He chose their wives, and married Isaac to Catherine, daughter of Samuel, the (Armenian ?) king of Bulgaria, and John to Anne, daughter of Alexius Charon, κατεπάνω in Italy, and a Dalassene on the mother's side (his eight children survived him, destined to fill the highest places in the Roman world

[1] Lebeau's comment is delightful, and will not bear translation: "L'échange était avantageux, si le patriarche en eût été le maître." It is interesting to contrast the tone of Gibbon's inevitable quip on the same point: "An exchange, however, which the priest on his own account would probably have declined."

and to transform its institutions). This house ruled, sustaining or despoiling the commonwealth, for a hundred years; and the brief principate of Isaac (1057–1059), like that of Claudius Gothicus (268–270), was an augury or foretaste of the longer honours awaiting his kinsmen. For the abdication of Isaac interrupted the line; and in twenty-two years of loss and decay the empire learnt to regret the Comnenians. Had Isaac's brother succeeded and received the support (still indispensable) of the civil officials, had a continuous policy and a tactful demeanour reconciled the warrior and the bureaucrat, the history of the East might have run on different lines. It was scarcely the fault of the Comneni that by 1081 around them the traditions and institutions of Rome lay in ruins, and that a vigorous and not seldom oppressive predominance of a feudal clan was the only possible government.

Triumph of the Comneni: origin of the family.

§ 6. The causes of Isaac's comparative failure, brief reign, and early retirement are still enveloped in obscurity: it may be that ill-health is quite sufficient to explain the sudden collapse of the warrior-policy. Yet it appears that the dead-weight of a stubborn bureaucratic opposition, outwardly deferential, completely thwarted all reforming enterprise, and paralysed the zealous arm by the spiteful indolence of the permanent official. Isaac at the outset had to propitiate the Church; he abandoned two valuable pieces of preferment to the patriarch, the *œconomus* and the treasurer of the Great Church, saying, "That the Church should choose its own ministers." The doles, gifts, and pensions of Michael VI. had been wasteful and injudicious; they had been squandered upon laity and churchmen, while the military servants of the State had been starved or insulted. These he endeavoured to revoke without exciting undue resentment, and found the task beyond him. Himself setting a fine example of the

Strong clerical opposition to Isaac I.: his abdication.

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simple life, he excited the violent hatred of the clerics for suggesting an inquiry into the revenues of church and convent. He might have appeased the enmity of the ministerial world; but he committed the inexpiable offence in the eyes of a devout hierarchy. The Greek Church never forgave him; Cerularius the patriarch sets up all the well-known pretensions of sacerdotal sovereignty, which was so soon to kindle the flames of civil war in Western Europe. He assumed the purple buskins; pronounced the advantage to lie with the *sacerdotium* in the delicate weighing of the two powers, not with the *imperium;* and threatened, quite in the style of Hildebrand, that he who bestowed the crown could also take it away. Isaac deposed and confined him; and while awaiting the approval of a synod, he was both relieved and distressed by Michael's opportune death. Lichudes succeeded, the old minister of Constantine X., who had received as a solace for his feelings the titles *πρόεδρος*, *protovestiaire*, and *œconomus* at the Manganese convent. Isaac (it must be confessed) employed a ruse to secure the surrender of certain documents or charters of monastic immunity. The emperor, true to the Protestant spirit which existed even in the most devout princes since the Isaurians, desired to bring these petty autonomies within the pale of the common law; and to abolish the exempt jurisdictions or spiritual courts, which made little republics of these foundations. He prevailed on the *œconomus* to surrender these privileges, by threats of a synodal inquiry into some mythical irregularities in the life of the Patriarch-Designate; and Lichudes complied. It is impossible not to remark here the complete resemblance of East and West in the chief social features and problems. There is the same conflict between the secular and the clerical power; the same proud menace from the unarmed priest, strong only in conviction. But in the East (a more highly developed community) there was a third factor

in the duel of the knight and the priest,—the civil servant.[1]

Civilian influence predominant under C. XI.

§ 7. We do not know why Isaac Comnenus passed over his brother's claims in naming his successor: it is clear, however, that he did so, and that Constantine Dux or Ducas, an old companion-in-arms, was appointed as a compromise, to satisfy the court-party without estranging the Warriors. After the triumph of the federate or feudal party in 1057, Isaac, now emperor, had naturally become a convert to centralism and autocracy. He had gently disembarrassed himself of his inconvenient allies; and his successor was still more obviously annexed by the official ring. The curious may consult the learned account of the condition of the empire by C. Neumann; and it needs but little direct proof to convince us that the years 1059–1067 witnessed a steady civilian reaction.[2] Ducas took pains to conciliate

[1] Finlay's comment upon the success of the Comnenians (1057) is curious, and a good indication of the confusion of his judgment on matters Byzantine: "Perhaps no man then living perceived that this event was destined to change the whole system of government, destroy the fabric of the central administration, deliver up the provinces of Asia an easy conquest to the Seljuk Turks, and the capital a prey to a band of Crusaders." Let any one read Psellus' account of the policy and purposes of the princes after Basil (*Isaac*, §§ 51–57), and in spite of the execrable style and redundant or conflicting metaphors, he will recognise the real culprits,—the civilians, and the sole cause of the disunion which thwarted all active good service to the State, in the envy of the two factions. It would be unfair to confound the Comneni (with their modesty and public spirit, their heroic struggles against fortune, their untiring energy) with any vulgar feudal individualist who wrecked a throne, and won a power which he did not know how to exercise. It was not their fault that Roman tradition was extinct, when at last all opposition to the military empire disappeared (1081); and so far from inviting the invaders of East and West, Seljuks or Latins, the Comneni alone kept out the former and managed the latter. The Angeli returned to a corrupt peace and sloth, and the consequence was the collapse of 1204. The sporadic revivals of the empire, and the autumnal radiance of the Palæologi, were won by a return to the methods of the Comneni.

[2] From the personal knowledge and graphic account of Psellus we gather: (1) Pacific policy of the emperor (§ 17, ἑαυτῷ μόνῳ συμβούλῳ περὶ τὰ πρακτέα χρώμενος; depending on his own judgment he sometimes missed his aim): τὸ γοῦν βουλόμενον αὐτῷ ἦν μὴ πολέμοις τὰ περὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν διατίθεσθαι ἀλλὰ δώρων ἀποστολαῖς . . . δυεῖν ἕνεκα, ἵνα μήτε

Civilian influence predominant under C. XI.

the "politicals," discoursed with eloquence upon the duties of a ruler and the beauty of justice, professed that the crown of rhetoric was of far higher value in his eyes than the crown of empire; and made Constantine Psellus the tutor of his sons. There is no conclusive reason against his authentic connection with the earlier family of Ducas; did not a son, Nicolas, escape from the ill-fated venture of Constantine Ducas in 912? But he had abandoned the traditions and lost the spirit of his ancestors.

τὰ πλείω καταναλίσκοι τοῖς στρατιωταῖς κ. αὐτὸς διαγωγὴν ἔχοι ἀθόρυβον. Psellus (§ 18) rightly rebukes this policy, but his own Chinese contempt and ignorance of the foreigner is also to blame; he calls them Μύσοι and Τριβαλλοι, as if he were Demosthenes. (2) Is popular with the agricultural interest: (§ 16) οἱ δ' ἐπὶ τῶν ἀγρῶν οἳ τὸ πρὶν μηδὲ τὸν βασιλεύοντα ᾔδεισαν καθαρῶς αὐτῷ ἐνητένιζον, and benefited by kindly words and still kindlier deeds. Indeed, he had been a countryman all his life on his ancestral estate; (§ 6) ἐν ἀγροῖς διέτριβε τὰ πολλὰ κ. περὶ τὴν πατρῴαν βῶλον ἐπραγματεύετο. (3) Chief aim to spread equality and equity; (§ 2) πρῶτον τίθεται σπούδασμα ἰσότητα κ. εὐνομίαν κατασκευάσαι; and fill by fair means the exhausted treasury: (§ 3) βασιλείαν ἐν στενῷ . . . ὁρῶν πάντων . . . χρημάτων ἐξαντληθέντων, χρηματιστὴς μέσος ἐγένετο (that is, not oppressive); he left the treasury half-full. (4) Obliterates the old hard-and-fast distinction between *political* and *senatorial* classes; (§ 15) sending every one away honoured, leaving none neglected: οὐ τῶν ἐν τέλει, οὐ τῶν μετ' ἐκείνους εὐθύς, οὐ τῶν πόρρωθι, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τῶν βαναύσων οὐδένα· αἴρει γὰρ κ. τούτοις (? removes in favour of them) τοὺς τῶν ἀξιωμάτων βαθμούς, κ. διῃρημένων τέως τοῦ Πολιτικοῦ γένους κ. τοῦ Συγκλητικοῦ, αὐτὸς ἀφαιρεῖ τὸ μεσότοιχον κ. συνάπτει τὸ διεστῶς. We wish Psellus would give up metaphors and Scripture allusions and confine himself to facts; there are not many other traces of the distinction of department of which he speaks; and it is clear that in many passages where *civil* (πολ.) and *military* interests are contrasted, πολιτ. certainly includes, broadly, all who were not in the army-service. See in this very chapter (§ 7) the following summary of the Military Revolt of 1057: ἐν δεινῷ τῶν Στρατιωτῶν ποιουμένων, εἰ αὐτοὶ μὲν τὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ὅλων ἀγῶνα ὑποδύοιντο κ. τοῖς σώμασιν ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀρχῆς κινδυνεύοιεν, κατάρχοι δὲ τούτων ἐν ταῖς ἀρχαιρεσιαῖς τοῦ κράτους (*i.e.*, the empire) ἡ Σύγκλητος τὰ πολλὰ, μηδὲν τῶν κινδύνων ἐπαισθομένη. (5) His secret relations to Isaac: it would appear (§ 6–14) that Constantine was early marked out for the throne, was a favourite with the conspirators in 1057, yielded not unwillingly to Isaac, but received some promise in stipulation, which was ill-kept; received again during Isaac's illness promise of the succession, was again eluded on a partial recovery, owed to the boldness of Psellus the investiture with imperial insignia, and succeeded rather in spite of the moribund emperor than owing to his influence (§ 13, τὸ πᾶν ἀπογνοὺς τόν τε βασιλεύοντα ἐωρακὼς . . . εὐθὺς τῶν ἀνακτόρων ἀφίσταται.)

Civilian influence predominant under C. XI.

He frittered the imperial dignity by interest in petty detail, by neglect of the wider outlook, by ignorance of the graver issues. His industry and watchfulness (for he spared no pains) seemed to degenerate into pettiness and pedantry. He examined minutely into the conduct of the civic magistrates, sat as assessor with the judges, and interfered in the ordinary course of justice with the well-meaning but vicious influence of an autocrat. He usurped the functions of his lieutenants, and failed to find a post or duties of his own. Courting his favour, the warriors become barristers, and plead instead of fighting. Corrupted by his own virtues he overrode the law, made personal exceptions and immunities under cover of equity, unconsciously altered the whole tenor of the code, and introduced a weak and amiable arbitrariness into the most steadfast institution of the empire. Liberal to the monks, he kept the soldiers on short rations, disbanded troops to avoid expense, made employment venal, and opened all office without reserve or distinction to senators and commonalty alike. Like Justinian, he preferred to purchase peace from a barbarian foe than to raise up a possible competitor at home at the head of a victorious army: when Belgrade was captured, when the raids of the Uzes spread unwonted desolation and havoc, he ransomed Nicephorus Botaneiates (the future emperor) and Basil Ἀπόκοιτος, and refused to send an army against the invaders. The forces were indeed in a pitiable plight: captains were ignorant, troops ill-disciplined and badly equipped, peculation on the part of the ubiquitous civilian treasurers and assessors systematic. Personally brave, he conceived the astonishing design of marching against the Uzes with a knightly retinue of 150 "paladins." This project, quite in keeping with the romantic and chivalrous spirit of the time, had an unexpected success. The barbarians took to flight (1065), and cease to be a menace to the empire for the future.

Misplaced energy and chivalry.

Misplaced energy and chivalry.

Many settle as submissive subjects in those districts of Macedonia which seemed to open inexhaustible expanses to the barbarian colonist. (Civilised and faithful in the imperial service, their descendants fought for Rome and attained high office. Other branches of the now scattered family settled, under the vague name of Turkmans, in Armenia; and others again in Moldavia and the country north of the Danube.) Constantine XI. showed the usual clemency to forlorn and detected conspirators. Even the city prefect was implicated in a plot to drown the emperor when passing to the Manganese convent by galley on St. George's Day; and retribution stopped at the confiscation of estates. Though simple and unostentatious in personal life and habits, and curtailing in some degree the costly waste of the court, Constantine got the name of avarice, and was accused, even by well-wishers, of a dangerous parsimony in the matter of national defence.

Emperors' brothers during XIth century: the two Johns.

§ 8. The real business of government in the eleventh century rested largely with the brothers of the sovereign. John the Paphlagonian, President of the Foundling Hospital, had been the effective minister from 1030–1041, and was only expelled by his nephew's ungrateful folly. The brother of Isaac Comnenus, sharing with Catacalon the high titular dignity of *Curopalat*, would seem to have brought into a now empty office some genuine duties. The Cæsar, John Ducas, brother of Constantine XI., was for twenty years the moving spirit and the final arbiter in the curious developments which ended in the Comnenian victory (1060–1081). When Constantine XI. (like most Byzantine princes in this eleventh century) fell rapidly into declining health, he commended his wife and the young Augusti to his brother's care; bidding her follow his advice in everything, and his sons to obey him as a father. Eudocia Macrembolitissa, without any technical exclusion of her sons, assumed the sovereignty and

reigned alone, perhaps the fourth time in this period (since Basil's death) that one or two princesses had been recognised as regnant. Although bound by a promise to the defunct prince not to contract a second marriage, Eudocia was expected by the Byzantine world to follow the example of Theophano and of Zoe. Intrigues were set on foot to find a suitable match. One favourite was Nicephorus Botaneiates, lately arrived in the capital with a remnant of his troops and a few foreign auxiliaries attached to him by the feudal tie of personal loyalty; his main force having disbanded in Armenia, no doubt in protest against arrears of pay and consistent neglect on the part of the home government. The choice of the empress fell on an unexpected head, and the previous career of Romanus Diogenes had given the public no warrant that he would attain the chief place by marriage and legitimate association. His father had been convicted of treason, and owed his death to his own ungovernable temper. Not a few Byzantine rulers crept up the ladder of promotion in spite of such a family history; and Romanus found no hindrance to advancement. Appointed patrician and Duke of Sardica, he had applied to Constantine XI. for the titular office of *Protovestiaire*, which would otherwise appear an uncongenial post for a member of the militant faction. Ducas replied with unusual brevity, "Deserve it"; and Romanus achieved no little success against the Patzinaks. The commission of Master of the Wardrobe was duly sent; and Ducas with unwise candour or spitefulness remarked that he owed it to his own right hand, and not to the imperial favour. Sullen, but not yet openly mutinous, Romanus waited for the demise of Constantine XI.; and was on the event at once suspected by the court-party of designs against an empress-regent and three infants. He was summoned to the capital, and the charge duly laid and supported by certain proof. Yet his situation excited

Emperors' brothers during XIth century: the two Johns.

Disgrace and sudden elevation of Diogenes (1067).

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a general sympathy; and the empress, warming towards a gallant soldier, recommended the justices to reconsider their verdict and their sentence. However much we may deplore the constant interference of the Roman sovereign in the course of ordinary justice, we cannot deny that such intervention was universally employed on the side of mercy. In the light of further evidence and the obvious partiality of the empress, Romanus was acquitted; but despatched to his Cappadocian estates to muse awhile on the vicissitudes of fortune and the caprices of the law. On his way thither a messenger recalled him to receive the honours of *magister militum* and στρατηγός. Meantime, Eudocia has got from the patriarch Xiphilinus the solemn document in which at her husband's express desire she had abjured second nuptials; and it is stated that the credulous prelate was led to believe that the favoured candidate was to be his own brother Bardas. The aged monk wasted much valuable time in reading the dissolute Bardas the wholesome lessons of restraint in his new dignity: the court-party were still pressing the claims of Botaneiates by obscure suggestion; when Eudocia put an end to all surmise by calling Romanus to the palace and announcing her marriage.

B. The Military Regency and the Cæsar John: Beginnings of Latin Intervention: the Misrule of Nicephoritzes (1067–1078)

Novel influences: Varangians and Latin soldiers of fortune.

§ 1. The ambitious had to reckon with a new factor, the loyalty of the palace-guard, the Varangians. They were devoted to the family of Ducas, and we may well suppose that they had not been allowed to suffer from the straitened resources of the military chest or the thrift of the war-office. They take up arms for the young Augusti, and threaten to burn the palace. Eudocia reasons with the modest and dutiful Michael, who had been awakened by his

mother and Psellus on the eve of the marriage to hear the startling news. She convinces him of the need of a regent to guard the rights of legitimate innocence, and promises that when they are of full age their stepfather will retire. Michael VII. appeased the tumult, and the Varangians (who were never the same menace as the Turkish mercenaries in Bagdad) returned to their duty. The military party rallied round the new emperor ; and the five sons of the *Curopalat* John Comnenus, recently dead, pressed (when their age allowed) into the service of a vigorous captain. Romanus IV. lost no time in setting the dilapidated machinery of the army in motion. His levies comprised a motley assemblage of Macedonians, Bulgars, and Cappadocians. All Phrygia was placed under requisition for men and supplies. The Uzes, recent enemies of the empire, joined the standard ; Norse bands under Crispin ; and Varangians from the palace-guard, now reconciled to their new master. Into the early successes and campaigns of Diogenes we need not enter ; but we cannot dismiss without notice the novel element in the situation, the Norse *condottieri*. Hervè, Radulph (or Randolph), Gosselin, and later Russell of Balliol, must occupy the attention of the historian ; forerunners of the Latin movement eastwards, which resulted in the Latin kingdom and counties of the twelfth century, and impartially spent itself against the Christian empire in 1204. Crispin belonged, it was said, to the ancient corsair-family of the Grimaldis of Monaco ; but his fathers had settled in Normandy under Duke Rollo, and had learnt something of the roving life of these turbulent vassals of France. He became an adventurer and a soldier of fortune, and entered the service of the empire with his men, whether kinsmen or retainers. Romanus IV. sent him into Asia ; but receiving irregular pay, he began to live by the plunder of citizens and tax-gatherers. He defeated the Bulgar prince Samuel

Novel influences: Varangians and Latin soldiers of fortune.

Novel influences: Varangians and Latin soldiers of fortune.

Alusianus (whose sister Diogenes had married), and the Turks sent against him by the questionable policy of the time. It was but a half-hearted mutiny; and neither master nor servant was in earnest. Crispin demanded, and Romanus granted, a full amnesty; but on his recall the court-whispers again convince the emperor of his treason and he is sent into captivity at Abydos. The Frank colony at Manzikert revolts at this cold treatment, and pillages Mesopotamia. Meantime the Turkish war runs its course; Iconium is ravaged in 1069, Colossæ (Khonæ) in 1070; and after the great defeat at Manzikert (where the faint assistance of doubtful friends compromised the day) a treaty was drawn up of amity and alliance, subject to a ransom for the imperial captive and a yearly tribute or a subsidy of 360,000 pieces of gold.

Civilian reaction after defeat of Manzikert.

§ 2. The subsequent proceedings to the death of Romanus IV. are obscure and perhaps discreditable; but it is not easy to single out any one actor for censure. In the alarming rumours which reached the capital, Romanus was reported dead, or given up for lost. The Cæsar John hurried home from the pleasures of the Bithynian chace, to guard the claims of his nephews and retrieve the error of the fatal marriage. At first the proposal embodied the joint-rule of Eudocia and her son; the rights of Andronicus I. and Constantine XII. being tacitly set aside. Meantime, Romanus was on the march, to vindicate his prerogative: this, unlike Regulus of old (*capitis minor* in virtue of his capitulation), he did not consider abrogated. The Cæsar exacted an oath from the guard never to acknowledge Diogenes; and these proclaiming Michael VII. sole emperor, rush to the apartments of the empress with loud and angry cries. Eudocia, hiding in a cavern, was rescued by the Cæsar, but forced to retire to a convent, where she survived perhaps until the arrival of the earliest Latin pilgrims. Constantine (the

Cæsar's son) was sent in command against Romanus the outlaw, and defeats him at Amasea, his headquarters, driving him into the fortress of Tyropæum. The faithful Armenian Chatatures reinforces and encourages him; and on the arrival of envoys from Michael VII. offering terms, the ex-emperor returns an explicit negative. The mother of the Comneni, suspected of sympathy with his cause, is exiled to Princes' Isle, like many dignified and unhappy personages down to our own time. Andronicus (another son of the Cæsar) is now entrusted with the conduct of the war, which for some reason Constantine had surrendered. But Romanus, shut up in Adana, and absorbed in melancholy and humiliation, took no further part, but depended on the eager loyalty of Chatatures. But this friend is taken prisoner, and Romanus at last surrenders, receiving the solemn promise of personal safety from the Archbishops of Chalcedon, Heraclea, and Colonea. Andronicus, brave but faithless (as was alleged) in the great battle of Manzikert, behaved well to his imperial captive. He is detained for a time at Cotyæum in Phrygia; and the order of the Cæsar arrives for the extinction of his sight. We can well believe the asseveration of Psellus that Michael VII. knew nothing of this barbarity, and that on this occasion, as on many others, the viziers and ministers worked their own will under cover of their master's name. As to the act itself, Psellus evidently believes that it was fully justified from a political view and in the crisis of the moment. He deplores it only from the side of that humanity which was accepted as a Byzantine tradition; and he does not regard it as a breach of good faith. Andronicus refuses to comply, and showed his indignation by genuine protests. But the Cæsar regent was all-powerful, and the blinded emperor, conveyed to the isle of Protè, died there untended in that temper of Christian resignation and calm

Civilian reaction after defeat of Manzikert.

Romanus deposed by Cæsar John.

Romanus deposed by Cæsar John.

heroism, which we learn to expect in misfortune from these "Greeks of the Lower Empire." Such was the end of the last colleague-regent from the military party, and the acute struggle between the two ideals of government culminated in the year 1071. The character of Diogenes has been differently estimated. Rather, while we admire his energy and valour, we must not deny his faults. Reigning by the kind indulgence of his sovereign, who pardoned and raised him to share her throne, he was arrogant, selfish, and boastful. He drew to himself the sole power, ill-treating her (if we may believe the envious Psellus) with actual blows, and committing, in the view of that strong constitutionalist, the cardinal blunder or crime of a ruler, depending on his own judgment alone and refusing advice. The results were mischievous. The name of the gentle pedant Michael was abused by an unscrupulous minister. The injury rankled in the mind of the warriors; and Cæsar John, recognising his error and seeing with alarm the condition of the empire, threw his weight into the scale of the soldiers, and brought in the Comnenian dynasty.

Ministers and generals under M. VII.: Nicephoritzes.

§ 3. The mildness of Michael VII. was inopportune, and his good intention was ineffectual. He was the victim of his servants, and exerted as little influence over Roman destinies as over the See of Ephesus, which he is said to have once visited as its metropolitan. Coming from a warlike stock (as his name implies) he had lost all their aptitude or ambition. He was like Claudius or our own James I., a punctilious purist and grammarian; and he carried the literary aspirations of his father to a dangerous extent, under the careful training of Psellus. He wrote poems and discoursed on rhetoric, and played the docile Marcus Aurelius to his teacher's Fronto. Even the Cæsar John (like the Chinese regent at the present moment) did not himself transact the heavy imperial business. The vizierate

was now a recognised and perhaps a necessary institution; for princes born in the purple and bred in the palace knew nothing of the realm or its needs. They listened to the only home-truths they were likely to hear, from outspoken bystanders during some solemn procession. An episcopal chancellor was the centre and arbiter of all normal administration, the Archbishop of Sidè, in Pamphylia, a wise and admirable man of business. He recalled Anna, mother of the Comneni; and cemented a friendship with the most numerous and powerful family by marrying a cousin of the young empress to the eldest son, Isaac: Irene was a daughter of the king of the Alans, then vassal to the Iberian ruler, Bagrat IV., whose daughter Mary wedded two emperors in succession, Michael VII. and Nicephorus III. This happy state of affairs did not last. Under Constantine XI. a certain Nicephoritzes, a Galatian eunuch, had been a secretary of State, and Eudocia hating, like Theodora, his chicanery and false suspicions, procured his dismissal somewhat strangely by giving him the duchy of Antioch, an unsuitable post for a subtle bureaucrat. Here he won the dislike and contempt of the province; and Constantine XI. recalled him and placed him in custody. But the regent Romanus IV. was indebted to him for large funds raised for the expenses of the Turkish war,—the method and source of which financial aid he no doubt forbore to investigate too closely. He released him from prison, and gave him the post of Chief Justice of Hellas and the Peloponnese, an office once held by Monomachus (*c.* 1040). The Cæsar John created him grand *Logothete*, and the Roman world once again beheld a John of Cappadocia. Worming himself into the confidence of Michael VII., he supplants the Cæsar and becomes sole favourite. If we can believe the historians, there is nothing but indictments and accusations, delations and spying and heavy sentences, con-

Ministers and generals under M. VII.: Nicephoritzes.

Ministers and generals under M. VII.: Nicephoritzes.

fiscation of municipal or private wealth, such as we are led to expect to-day from a very different form of government. Appointed sovereign administrator of the Hebdom monastery, he perverts the donations of the pious laity to his own profit; and creates a lucrative monopoly in wheat (like early Roman governors and American financiers) by buying up the harvest of Thrace and garnering the grain at Rhedestus. Diminishing the bushel by a quarter, and enhancing the price for the reduced measure, he won for his unfortunate master the unmerited nickname by which he is known in history, παραπινάκης. The Cæsar in umbrage had again retired to his Asiatic hunting-grounds, and employed six months in that strenuous leisure, which brings the Byzantine noble, out of office, so much nearer to the English statesman than to the lethargic Roman of classical days. But Nicephoritzes grew alarmed at the steadily rising influence of the Comneni; and recalled the Cæsar. Once more he assumed the upper hand; and once more the eunuch-minister has to disembarrass himself of a benefactor and a rival.

Russell revolts and captures Cæsar John.

He induced Michael VII. to believe that no one else could conduct the campaign against Russell (Οὐρσήλιος), the second Latin adventurer who disturbed Asia at this time. Succeeding to the command of the Frankish "foreign legion" after Crispin the φραγγοπουλὸς, he had shown to the Comneni the feudal spirit of insubordination, and levied contributions and subsidies like a brigand-chief throughout Phrygia, Galatia, and Cappadocia. The Cæsar's army was a motley gathering, like the forces of Romanus IV.: barbarians from the European side, a Frank corps commanded by Pape, and the usual Asiatic levies of Phrygia and Lycaonia. An actual battle was fought near the river Sangarius in Galatia with the mutineers; and forms an excellent instance of the danger of mercenary troops and of the personal resentment which at several crises in our

history divided interests and paralysed action. The Frank contingent not unnaturally fraternised with their rebel kinsmen; and Nicephorus Botaneiates, annoyed since the disappointment of 1067, sullenly draws off his forces, exposing the brave Cæsar to the whole brunt of the fight. The Cæsar, trying to rescue his son Andronicus in a dangerous combat, is taken and made a prisoner with him by the exultant Russell. *Russell revolts and captures Cæsar John,*

§ 4. The days of the fifth century are now revived. Once more the Teuton or Norseman gains admittance into the empire after a rigorous exclusion of 600 years. Once more in the camp of a Latin mercenary is carried about a tame Cæsar, poor, spectral heir of Augustus and Trajan. The captive of yesterday becomes the honoured guest and titular sovereign, and the rebellion takes on the excuse of a vindication of John's rights. It is doubtful if Russell for a brief moment entertained the design of seizing the throne himself; it is obvious that if so he speedily abandoned it. Constantine (elder son of the Cæsar) was sent by the minister Nicephoritzes to avenge the fate of his father and brother; but on the eve of taking command he dies of colic, and I prefer not to impute to the incredible villainy and folly of the eunuch a sad event entirely explicable by natural causes.

Russell armed the imperial family against itself; and forced the genuinely reluctant Cæsar to assume the imperial title. At first he declined the honour, but hearing that he had many partisans in the capital, and honestly desirous of saving the dynasty, he at last assented. Like Attalus or Eugenius or Gerontius he is saluted emperor by the Franks. After this events moved wildly. Michael VII. sends to Russell as token of pardon and amity his wife and children, and gave him the title *Curopalat.* But the crafty minister, no doubt without the express order or cognisance of the emperor, stirred up against the *and proclaims him emperor.*

Cæsar John proclaimed emperor.

rebel and his usurper the forces of the Turks. It is difficult to realise the condition of the Asiatic interior after the defeat of Manzikert. The comedy of the Roman succession was played out on a deserted scene, and the victors gained little advantage from their dissension or preoccupation. The levies were made in the very districts we might well suppose were harried and ransacked by the Seljuk ; and the solution must be that only sporadic detachments of Curds and Turkmans pressed on, each acting separately, towards the western coast, and were the pioneers of a constant filtration into Ionia. Astonishingly quiescent, the main body of Turks halted on the verge of Cappadocia under Tutach, to the number of 100,000. These attack the troops of Russell; against the Cæsar's advice (he could not command his imperious Master of the Horse) the first onset is fiercely resisted, and Russell fell into the main contingent unawares. The Cæsar joined the mad enterprise and shared his fate. Both were taken prisoners ; and Michael VII., relieved at the failure of the condottieri-captain, ransoms his uncle and obliges him to take the monk's cowl and tonsure. Unhappily for the peace of Pontus and the security of the court, Russell recovers his liberty, and spreads havoc in the neighbourhood of Amasea and Neocæsarea. Michael, deferring to the last the dreaded help of the Comnenians, sends to requisition 6000 men from the Prince of the Alans (either in accordance with the express covenant of a treaty or in view of the recent marriage-alliance). Nicephorus Palæologus (first mention of this familiar name) is sent to take command ; and with the usual perversity of the civilian war-office pay is withheld, and the once alert allies disband in confusion.

Seized by Turks, Russell regains his freedom,

but is reduced by Alexius.

§ 5. It was agreed by all that the only hope of safety lay in the valour of the united clans. Alexius, now aged twenty-five, received a commission to extirpate the

tyrant, and like Belisarius, was told to expect neither men nor money from the State. Raising his own retainers, and acting with that humane tact which passes with the closet-historian for craven duplicity, he detached the soldiers and Turkish allies from the cause of the Norse rebel. Tutach seized Russell once more—and this time in the service of the empire—and sent him bound to Alexius at Amasea. Here occurred the curious incident, when the merchants of Amasea refused to assist the imperialists by a subsidy; when Alexius appealed to the people against the selfishness of the middle class, like a true Cæsar in a democratic republic, or a Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer in a popular budget. Movements were still being made to deliver Russell, and enable him to continue the guerilla-warfare which was the delight of his band of countrymen. Alexius by a kindly pretence affects to blind the rebel to keep off his dangerous friends, and conveys him to Constantinople; there he is beaten and immured. —The Balkan district was at this juncture disturbed by a revolt of Bulgars and Serbs, to diversify by a foreign war the constant series of domestic sedition. The former, exasperated by the fiscal exaction of Nicephoritzes (just as before under Leo VI. by Stylianus), chose a king and defied, without success, the European imperialists: their king was sent out of danger and out of mischief into a Syrian exile, but was subsequently delivered and came home. The Servian revolt was fostered and maintained by Longibardipoulos with his Lombard kinsmen from Italy, and his influence was increased by his marriage with the king's daughter. The capital was dissatisfied at the inaction of Michael VII.: after the example of Romanus IV., military prowess was once more believed to form an indispensable title. But in this respect at least Michael was incompetent, and had no vain illusions; he decided, not without the approval of his all-powerful minister, to confer the title Cæsar

Russell reduced by Alexius.

Movement in the Balkans.

Disappointment of Bryennius, who prepares a revolt.

Disappointment of Bryennius, who prepares a revolt.

upon Bryennius, then sojourning at his birthplace, Adrinople, for long past the home of a warlike spirit and an independent population. Before Bryennius obeyed the summons, Michael VII. changed his mind, or suffered it to be changed by the insidious eulogists of the merits, the courage, the enterprise of the new favourite. As to Agricola under Domitian, the *laudantes amici* were the most deadly of his foes. He is given the title Duke of Bulgaria, and the commission to chase the Serbs and Slavs. He has great success; and extending his sphere he settles at Dyrrachium, and from thence curbs the insolence of Croats and the forays of Norse pirates. A second Pompey, he soon subdues all disturbing elements, and cleanses the Adriatic Gulf, which since Basil had begun once more to recognise a Byzantine sovereign. This enterprise provided prestige and employment for the military class; but discontent was still rife in other quarters, owing to the tactless injuries of the Premier and the withdrawal of rations and equipment. The Danubian garrisons were at the time commanded by an old slave of Constantine XI., Nestor, decorated with the ducal title, who acted in concert with Tat, a Patzinak chief in the imperial service. The half-pagan forces had been guilty of sacrilege in the search for booty at Prespa during the recent war. Deprived of all their plunder for reasons which appear to them singularly inadequate, they burst into open mutiny, and carried with them their commanders Tat and Nestor. Presenting themselves before the walls of the capital, they demand what they believed in their honest conviction to be simple justice. Nicephoritzes, who never lost an occasion of humiliating a captain, confiscates the estate of Nestor; and nearly succeeds in securing his person. But the duke departed, began to lay waste Thrace, Macedonia, and the Bulgarian frontier, and finally retired among the Patzinaks. In the sedition of barbarian auxiliaries the Macedonian

troops had taken no part; but they too had their grievances and demanded redress. Their envoys listen to the scornful refusal and acrimonious insult, habitual in the treatment of the army; and returning to Macedonia, with bitterness in their heart, communicate their discontent and prepare the way for the great rising of Nicephorus Bryennius.

Disappointment of Bryennius, who prepares a revolt,

§ 6. In 1077, Bryennius found his position intolerable, owing to the weakness of his sovereign and the enmity of the minister. He was amazed to discover that the friendly envoy Eustathius had been sent by the timid Michael to penetrate his motives and purpose; and the unfounded suspicion of treason converted a loyal subject into a traitor. But it is unlikely that he would have taken the initiative, if his brother John and Basilacius had not returned from an interview with the minister, furious at his refusal of all their requests for recompense and recognition. John retired in dudgeon to his Thracian estate (for the great feudal landlords were not confined to Lesser Asia), and hears with indignation and alarm that a drunken Varangian in a village inn near Adrinople had boasted of his secret commission to compass his murder. He seizes, examines, and cuts his nose; and will owe to this not unseasonable severity his own assassination some years later. In concert with the chief inhabitants of Adrinople he works to arouse an insurrection, and excites his still hesitating brother at Dyrrachium. He even overcomes the scruples of the long faithful loyalist Tarchaniotes, who, unable to arouse the Premier to a sense of danger, felt himself compelled to join the rebel and married his sister to John's son. The minister, neither competent nor diplomatic, actually allowed his master to name Basilacius governor of Illyria, with orders to give short shrift to the mutineers and seize Nicephorus. Reconciled for a moment to the imperial cause by this unmerited honour, he at first refuses the overtures of the

and assumes the purple.

Bryennius assumes the purple.

Bryennians; but in the sequel joined them at Thessalonica with his men. All the Thracian and Macedonian troops are assembled outside Trajanople; and Nicephorus, still averse to taking the final and irrevocable step, is here persuaded to do so, by the threats or entreaties of friends and soldiers and by the nocturnal shouts of the beleaguered city itself in his honour. This took place on October 3rd. (Seven days later, as we shall see, Nicephorus Botaneiates also assumed the purple.) He marches to his home, Adrinople, and is welcomed with joy. The Bryennians now suggest terms to the emperor, for whom they entertained nothing but good-humoured contempt and pity. In an age affording many remarkable instances of brotherly unselfishness, John was, according to custom, decorated with the titles of *Curopalat* and Grand Domestic and sent forward with the Uzes and Patzinaks. Rhedestus, home of the late iniquitous monopoly, and Panium were both willingly surrendered to the party; and for some obscure cause Heraclea was burnt,—a rare incident of retaliation in a chivalrous age when constant warfare implied neither ravage nor cruelty. Indeed, a similar incident or accident estranged the warm sympathies of the citizens of the capital, who were preparing to declare themselves for Bryennius. They were filled with anger at the wanton havoc wrought by some barbarian marauders across the Horn in the suburban houses, which, though deserted, still contained their rich furniture, believed to be safe in the mimic tournament of a civil war. Michael VII. sends out the titular Augustus Constantine XII. in company with the indispensable Alexius and Russell, taken from his dungeon. Hastily arming their own domestics and any chance comer, they break out and surprise these buccaneers, carrying captive twenty of their stragglers. This petty defeat, magnified into a triumph by the populace, and the irksome delay before the walls, cooled the ardour of the Bryennians;

The Capital invested and relieved.

and John, who had not ceased to be a Roman because he rebelled against an odious minister, started at once in pursuit on hearing the report of a fresh Patzinak inroad. The investing army breaks up and, directed to the Chersonese, inflicts loss on the invaders; while his brother, the emperor of Adrinople, secures by means of the captives the firm friendship and alliance of the Patzinaks for his cause.

The Capital invested and relieved.

§ 7. The situation on the eve of the revolt of Botaneiates was singular and anomalous. The capital was defended by Germans and Varangians, and administered by a slave. The emperor, kindliest of men, was known to exert no influence, and spent his time in those harmless literary pursuits which from Claudius and Nero to Michael VII. formed a most serious charge in the indictment of a Cæsar. The armies, divided into the European and the Asiatic, and reinforced by foreign and barbarian aid, were still in large part composed of native levies. After a long silence the reviving *themes*, or rather *duchies*, of the western empire claimed to exercise the prerogative of choosing their ruler. The Macedonian troops, grudgingly supported by the civilian war-office, were attached to their feudal captains, taken from a few notable families of Asiatic and Armenian descent. The populace, by no means servile or cowed by these constant "pronunciamentos," welcomed a military pretender, compassionated their powerless but innocent prince, and detested the tyranny of the monopolist. The Seljuks, during the whole term of Michael's nominal reign, would seem to have withheld their hand, and left the arena free for the settlement of the Roman disputes. Indeed, they are found more often acting as obedient allies and vassals than as active foes. Still, the roving bands filtered through into the deserted interior of Lesser Asia, pressed to the western coasts, and formed the principal support of the forces of Melissenus, yet

Strange situation of the empire in Europe and Asia, 1078.

Strange situation of the empire in Europe and Asia, 1078.

another Nicephorus, to whom must be ascribed the foundation of the Sultanate of Rüm. The astonishing silence and modesty of the Turk after Manzikert allowed free-play to the combatants in that strange duel of civilian and soldier, during which the institutions of ancient Rome completely disappeared.

CHAPTER XII

CONFLICT OF THE THREE NICEPHORI: THE MISRULE OF BORILAS; AND THE REVOLT OF THE FAMILIES OF DUCAS AND COMNENUS (1078–1081).

Union of Alexius with the house of Ducas.

§ 1. IN the somewhat tangled series of events which led finally to the seizure and sack of the capital by the Comnenians, the intimate relation and firm friendship of the two chief families must by no means be forgotten. Michael VII. had no more loyal subject and lieutenant than Alexius; Constantine XII. no more trusty companion. The Cæsar John, veritable king-maker of the period, maintained towards him throughout a consistent confidence and affection; and it was by his arbitrament, arguments, and entreaties that the crown was at last transferred to the Comnenian dynasty. Andronicus, his son, had never recovered strength after his wounds in the Russell tumult, and was slowly dying; his daughter, Irene Ducas, was married to Alexius, and the two houses doubly bound together. Constantine XII. would have preferred his own sister Zoe for his friend; and Anna Dalassena, mother of the Comneni, had not forgiven her brief and honourable exile at the hands of the Cæsar. Nor was the facile Michael convinced of the wisdom of this alliance. But John, who with the monk's cowl did not lose interest or influence in public affairs, had the usual success of firm resolve and honest purpose. After some trifling success of Alexius, objections were swept away and the nuptials celebrated amid great public joy.—Meantime the Eastern troops, honeycombed by discontent, envied the European forces their resolute conduct, but refused to acknowledge

Insurrection of Eastern troops under Botaneiates.

Insurrection of Eastern troops under Botaneiates.

their candidate. Once more the armies of the Taurus frontier sustained their prerogative of creating the prince, which was so long their unquestioned right. On October 10, 1077, a second Nicephorus Phocas, an aged and now lethargic veteran, assumed the purple, convoked the officers of Asia Minor, and divided amongst them the usual dignities and titles of honour. Only two captains of distinction preserved their good faith to the civilian régime; Nicephorus Melissenus (who won in later days a sinister fame) and George Palæologus, whose father at this time was in command of such territory and such forces as the Turks chose to allow the Romans in Mesopotamia. The cause of Botaneiates was everywhere popular, not by reason of his personal character so much as by way of protest against an unworthy tyrant. The towns of Pontus, Cappadocia, and Galatia opened their gates to him; well disposed towards a change of masters, and enlisted by trusty envoys, by the promises and example of senators and clergy, among whom the Patriarch of Antioch, Emilianus, was prominent. To the mind of Nicephoritzes suggested itself one single unique and unpatriotic expedient; he secretly begged Soliman to stop the nearer advance of the new rebels. But Botaneiates with but three hundred men manages, in spite of this formidable obstacle, to traverse the length of Asia Minor, by way of Cotyæum, Azula (on the Sangar), and Nice; and to disarm the hostility of the Sultan by the hired offices of Kroudj (Chrysosculus), the amiable renegade. Before the walls of Nice, Nicephorus halts with his scanty following; he sees with consternation the battlements manned and the walls lined with soldiers and citizens. But to his relief and joy it is his own name that is thundered forth by them in the imperial salutation; and he reposes securely in the city while awaiting reinforcement from his friends and news from the capital. For in Constantinople the sympathy was general;

senators and clergy, as in Asia, were warm adherents; Emilian of Antioch and the Archbishop of Iconium, leaving their flocks, succumbed to the delights of political intrigue.

Insurrection of Eastern troops under Botaneiates.

§ 2. The support of the Cæsar John was believed to be essential to success. An envoy, Michael Barus, was sent to shake his constancy, but to no purpose; and the indignant uncle apprehends the emissary, and informs his nephew and (what was more important) the minister Nicephoritzes. But the inertia or mistaken clemency of Michael VII. ruined any hopes of prompt action, in which still remained a chance of success. The conspirators the next day (March 24) open the prisons (a now favourite method), and assemble in St. Sophia, where revolution always sought the divine sanction, and failure the divine protection. In the still potent names of Senate and Patriarch they summoned all good citizens to repair with them to the great church. But Alexius advises stern measures; and believes that one charge of the palace-guard under a well-known captain would disperse the mutineers. The emperor is shocked at this advice; "Would you have me lose my reputation for clemency?" asked the unhappy scholar; and abdicating in favour of his brother, Constantine XII., he retired to the church of Blachern.

Abdication of Michael VII.

The new monarch at once repudiates the offer of a throne, and hastens to pay his homage to the veteran who is cautiously and by slow stages approaching to assume the power which Michael had let fall so tamely. Borilas, a slave, is sent ahead to take formal possession of the palace in the name of Nicephorus III., and Alexius and Constantine are welcomed in the camp, though his distrust and suspicion of the Ducas family is only dispelled by the straightforward apology of Alexius. The Cæsar John, who had not been allowed to save his nephew's throne, now advises him in his irretrievable plight to become a monk, and the Studium receives the imperial novice.

Borilas enters the palace and takes vengeance on Nicephoritzes.

Borilas enters the palace and takes vengeance on Nicephoritzes.

Meantime, Nicephoritzes makes good his escape to Selymbria, where at his command Russell the Norman had taken his stand. He essayed to turn the Norman to the cause of Bryennius, and failing, is believed to have poisoned him. The friends of Russell carried the fallen minister to Nicephorus III., who sends him into exile. But the household slaves who then controlled the government, Borilas and Germanus, urge the emperor to inquire into his secret hoards of wealth. Contrary to the emperor's orders, torture is used by Straboromanus to compel restitution, and under it Nicephoritzes expired (1078).

Weakness and extravagance of Nicephorus III.

§ 3. This bloodless revolution had once more restored the supreme authority to a warrior. But, from the military point of view, the character and spirit of the soldier, once elevated to the purple, underwent a complete deterioration. The etiquette of the palace confined him within its precincts, and formulated his daily routine with rigid precision. He inherited all his predecessor's diffidence in respect of the army-corps, reposed his trust and the welfare of the realm solely in menials, and once more raised the old struggle between the warrior and the civilian. Borilas and Germanus were the imperial slaves and confidants, who rose, like Icelus in the service of Galba, from household duties to the control of affairs. Botaneiates, to secure the still doubtful favour of the official world, opens the treasury, and with spendthrift generosity, lavishes titles and pensions broadcast. The State was ruined by these extravagant doles; distinctions were vulgarised; the fisc was exhausted; and at last recourse was had to the most disgraceful expedient of a bankrupt empire—the debasement of the coinage. He attempted to come to terms with Bryennius, his Macedonian rival, and despatches Straboromanus, a kinsman of his own, with Chœrosphactes, a relative of Bryennius. They met the pretender in Mœsia, near Theodorople, and offered adoption as Cæsar and the second place in the

administration. Like Isaac Comnenus, in the similar crisis of 1057, Bryennius accepted these conditions, merely stipulating that the honours and titles of his partisans should be confirmed, and that his coronation as Cæsar should take place outside the city. Asked his reason, he bluntly confessed his entire disbelief in the good faith of the ministers. Their influence broke off the negotiations; and the emperor had to appeal to Alexius, now invested with the rank of *Nobilissimus* and *Grand Domestic.* The names and numbers of the soldiers under his command are instructive and significant. The Eastern or Asiatic forces were still congregated on the Turkish frontier; and in 1077 (according to Samuel of Ani), six years after Manzikert, a Roman army had engaged with Gomechtikin near the old contested border-forts of Nisibis and Amida. Alexius had trained a new corps, the Immortals, named after the famous bodyguard of the Persians; he leads the men of Choma (Χωματηνοί), a detachment from Mount Taurus and the warlike settlements there; and this motley host is reinforced by Soliman the Seljuk. Advancing with Catacalon to the river Almyras, in Thrace, he comes in sight of the splendid array of Bryennius and Tarchaniotes of Adrinople (now his most faithful lieutenant); Italian mercenaries, Uzes and Patzinaks (under the terms of the recent alliance), and the regular detachments of Thrace and Macedonia, become of late the flower of the Roman forces. The battle was fought at Calabrya, and long hung in a doubtful issue. The Franks under Alexius desert to their kinsmen's side, and the Patzinaks rout the army of Catacalon. But by a clever ruse the Imperialists spread the report that Bryennius had fallen, and point to a riderless horse which had been captured by Alexius. The Turks arrive at the opportune moment, and add terror to the now wavering party of the pretender. As in most battles of the feudal period, there would seem to have been little loss of

Weakness and extravagance of Nicephorus III.

Alexius ends the revolt of Bryennius at Calabrya.

Alexius ends the revolt of Bryennius at Calabrya.

life and much chivalrous display of personal valour. The Turks, surrounding their gallant foe, entreat him not to throw away his life, and conduct him to Alexius. The two generals travel together in amicable intercourse as comrades, and Bryennius refuses to take advantage of the slumber of Alexius, either to avenge his own defeat or secure his safety by flight. But the vindictive ministers sent Alexius on another quest, and he was not able to entrust his captive to the clemency of Nicephorus. Borilas gives orders that Bryennius should be blinded; and the feeble emperor mourned the deed, disclaimed responsibility, and by every means—by invitation to the palace, and by new wealth and added dignities—attempted to atone for the irreparable outrage. With no less kindness he allowed the Bryennian faction to retain the grades and distinctions conferred by the usurper, and no further inquiry was made as to their behaviour in the recent sedition. The vengeance of a menial and a barbarian mercenary alone demanded cruel satisfaction; Borilas had mutilated Nicephorus, and the injured Varangian requited his own wrong by assassinating John, as he left the palace after a friendly interview with the emperor. At this murder and contempt for authority the cold prince was filled with righteous indignation, and wished to punish the criminal. The whole body of Varangians broke out into mutiny, and threatened to murder the emperor, to whom they had not yet transferred the contemptuous yet faithful loyalty borne to the house of Ducas. Botaneiates could not control his soldiers, and trembled before his servants. His gifts had not secured respect or affection; and the firm rule (as had been expected) of a resolute general became the tyranny of a palace-clique or a Turkish guard.

Revolt of Basilacius in Illyria.

§ 4. Meantime the harvest of pretenders was by no means over. The Western Provinces, awaking from their long slumber of exhaustion, claimed equal rights in the election of a prince. The area of the

malcontents comprised Illyria and Macedonia; the modern country of European Albania, and the home of the Shkipetars, the Toskidæ and Geghidæ, and of the formidable Turkish rebel Ali Pasha of Jannina. Basilacius took up the cause which had fallen almost by an accident from the hands of Bryennius. Long before the end of that futile revolt he had approached Achrida and consulted the Archbishop whether he should assume the purple. The churchman dissuaded him, and he retired, to watch events and to protect the empire, to Dyrrhachium, with his mingled forces of Illyrians, Macedonians, Bulgars, Franks, and Lombards from Italy. On the coronation of Nicephorus III. he wrote a letter of congratulation and welcome, and receives from him the title of *Nobilissimus* with a golden Bull. But while the contest of Imperialists and Bryennians was hanging in the balance, he threw off disguise and delays, took the Augustan name and attire, and waited with calm indifference to question the right and challenge the fortune of the survivor in the duel. Alexius encamped on a plain near the river Vardar (Axius), and Basilacius issued forth from his headquarters at Thessalonica (six leagues' journey) to encounter him. The engagement was long uncertain, and if we are to believe historians, it was at last decided, like Calabrya, by a conspicuous exploit of personal valour. This, while it turned the tide and determined the issue, gave no proof of the relative strength or spirit of the combatants. While Manuel, a nephew of Basilacius, exultantly proclaims aloud that the day is theirs, a Macedonian-Armenian and Imperialist named Curticius seizes him bodily, drags him from his saddle, and carries him off to the feet of Alexius. Basilacius drew off his crestfallen troops to Thessalonica, and is by them compelled to capitulate. Either the army was growing weary of constant sedition, or it had determined that the captain and inspired leader of the warriors could not be found

Revolt of Basilacius in Illyria.

Misgivings of Alexius, once more victorious.

in Basilacius. Once more the clemency of Alexius and of his sovereign was eluded or openly flouted; between Amphipolis and Philippi messengers arrive from Borilas, who demand the person of the captive, and inflict the usual penalty for high treason. The position of Alexius now gave him reason for serious thought. The trusted right hand and indispensable champion of the Imperialist cause, the friend and favourite of the aged emperor, he had become the sport of slaves, who sent him breathless from one post of danger to another, allowed him no repose, and robbed him of the recompense and credit of his victories. His achievements were tarnished by their cruelty and bad faith; and he knew well that they would hail his failure with secret joy, as they had regarded his success with spiteful envy. He was now decorated by his grateful sovereign with the new title Σεβαστός; and the "Greeks," in conferring this dignity upon private subjects outside the imperial family, would seem to forget that it is a mere translation of "Augustus." But the favour of the emperor counted for little at the court, and was no guarantee of security. Nicephorus III. had just married the wife of Michael VII., consoled for the loss of kingdom and partner with the Archbishopric of Ephesus; and the young Constantine XIII., born in the purple and invested with the imperial dignity in his cradle, became the stepson and prospective heir of a childless and uxorious prince; his proposed union to Robert Guiscard's daughter Helen was broken off, and in the issue we might see how fraught with evil result was this rupture.[1]

Restless state of European and Asiatic provinces.

§ 5. With the settlement of the disputed succession, the inhabitants of either continent might reasonably hope for a period of quiet and recuperation. Their

[1] The Byzantine court had now completely laid aside its vain and Chinese exclusiveness in the question of imperial princesses; the regulations or advice of Constantine VII., never adhered to with strict fidelity, were now again and again disregarded; and Nicephorus wedded his niece, a daughter of Theodulus of Synnada, to the Craal of Hungary.

hopes were disappointed. The European provinces were once more overrun by Patzinaks (no doubt the late allies of the two Macedonian pretenders), and by Paulicians, a fiery race of Covenanters, who still retained their faith and truceless hatred of Greek Church and Byzantine rule in their new home in Thrace. The former burnt a large part of Adrianople, home of the recent sedition. Lecas, a Paulician heretic, slays the Bishop of Sardica at the altar, and Dobrouni, another of the same creed, acting in concert with him, spreads terror in the vicinity of Mesembria. These two miscreants, tiring of outlawry, conceive the bold project of demanding amnesty and pardon from Nicephorus; it is granted with criminal indulgence, and thus the lenient ruler is obliged for the second time to condone an atrocious murder, in an age unusually tender in regard to human life. Nor was Asia more tranquil. The Turks had begun again their inroads, dissatisfied (as we may well suppose) with the recompense meted out by the courtiers for their service in the late sedition. Alexius, detained against the Basilacians, was not available, and Constantine XII., the son of Ducas, was sent in command. Never formally despoiled of the Augustan title which he had carried since birth, he conceives that the time has now arrived for enforcing his claims. Crossing to Chrysopolis with the forces allotted to him, he assumed the garb and title to which he had a right, and seemed uncertain whether he would teach the Turkish marauder a lesson or overthrow the government. But his attempt proves abortive; and Nicephorus immures him as a monk in some convent on the Propontis: in the next reign he will be seen as a trusted captain in the expeditions of Alexius. All these events seem crowded into a single anxious and turbulent year. But it would be a mistake to exaggerate the misery or bloodshed caused by these incessant civil wars. The condition and the senti-

Restless state of European and Asiatic provinces.

Futile rebellion of Const. XII.

Futile rebellion of Const. XII.

ment of the provinces, always obscure under a centralised government, cannot be distinctly revealed by the most patient search. Still, it may be inferred that the western half enjoyed considerable prosperity, in spite of the brilliant skirmishes and tourneys which amused the mercenaries and gratified the military instincts of the Armenian families and Macedonian nobles. As for Lesser Asia, it is hard to ascertain the extent or the design of the Turkish forays or Turkish migrations wending slowly and without violence to the western coast. Life went on much the same in the luxurious society of the walled towns, and the nomad Turkomans may have been accepted with indifference and permitted to settle, or rather bivouac, on Roman soil. This part of Asia, in a word, was Turkicised much as Greece and Macedonia were Slavonised in the seventh and eighth centuries. There was no definite moment when Roman authority ceased in the various districts, when the writ of a Roman emperor ceased to run. Permeated by degrees, and at first in its more desolate regions, by new colonists, the country lost by silent and stealthy encroachment its language, its government, and its creed. The urban centres still retained their wealth and culture, speedily recovered any violent raid which from time to time fell on them, and willingly abandoned to the new occupants whole tracts of superfluous pasturage. Meantime the new settlers or nomads, with a savage's deep-seated dislike of needless war, became peaceful countrymen, carrying into a desert the rules and customs of a patriarchal community. They crept into the service of the Romans, and into the religious faith of the Greeks. Utterly lacking in the conception of a wider polity than the tribe, they looked with amazement at the complicated mechanism of the empire, fell into place like Teutons and Goths before them as soldiers, husbandmen, and household domestics; and even

Like earlier Slavonic immigrants, the Turks penetrate into Asia Minor.

mounted into the high places of spiritual and civil rule.

Like earlier Slavonic immigrants, the Turks penetrate into Asia Minor.

§ 6. The influx of the Turks differed no doubt in important details and in general result; but the method was the same—a gradual infiltration and no definite challenge or conquest. We must repeat that the Turks, under Soliman, are found more often as allies than as enemies of Rome; and the attitude of the Seljuks was not by any means wholly hostile. As with the Goths under Valens, 378, their violence or breach of faith was often the issue of some tactless meddling of government officials. The Turkomans who followed in the train of the Seljuks were not fighters by conviction but bandits by necessity. Pillage was to them a means of livelihood; they had neither the fixed design nor the discipline necessary for annexation. Their masters and superiors, the Seljuk caste, had no wish to overthrow the empire. For the Sultanate of Rüm, which stands out so boldly in the map as an independent power, had its origin no doubt, like the Frankish power in Gaul or the Visigothic in Spain, in some curious and confused sentiment in which alliance, vassalage, and occasionally overt enmity were unequally blended. Nor can it be for a moment doubted that the real founder of this Turkish dominion in Hither Asia was a Roman and pretender to the purple. In 1080, Nicephorus "the Fifth," Melissenus, brother-in-law of Alexius, took the imperial title. Himself a great feudal lord in Cos, he had influence on the mainland. Allying with these roving Turkish bands he founded a principality along the coast, which gave an augury and example of the Latin counties in loose vassalage to the kingdom of Jerusalem. With these strange allies or mercenaries, he becomes master of Phrygia and Galatia; and it would be difficult to decide whether in effect a new usurper had assumed the purple or a foreign tribe had ousted Roman customs and authority from a large and fertile district. Was

"Nicephorus V." founds a Turkoman principality.

"Nicephorus V." founds a Turkoman principality.

it but another ephemeral revolt or a revolution? The chief cities opened their gates to him and his masterful servants without demur or conviction; and a powerful army of mixed troops was stationed in Nice (henceforth, until the coming of the Crusaders, the headquarters of a rival to the Byzantine Cæsar). The court proposed to send against this new pretender the usual scourge of rebels, Alexius. The emperor had lavished on him and his family the most honourable marks of favour and affection. Isaac, returning lately, 1079, from a prosperous viceroyalty as Duke of Antioch, was created Σεβαστὸς, lodged in the palace, and apparently chosen in all but open promulgation as heir-presumptive. His advice was taken, or at least he was officially consulted, in all affairs; and the star of the servile camarilla waned. Incapable of business, but well-meaning and amiable, Nicephorus III. might have reigned in confidence and security as a constitutional monarch had not the traditions of Byzantine despotism made him the prey and the victim of his valets.

Alexius declines to serve against him.

§ 7. Alexius, fatigued and distrustful, had lately curbed the raids of the Patzinaks, by turns servants and spoilers of the Balkan district. He put little faith in the imperial favour, or rather the imperial advisers, and declined the commission to overthrow the fifth Nicephorus. As in old times a palace-eunuch is appointed in his place, raised, like Narses under Justinian, from the control of the imperial wardrobe (πρωτοβεστιάριος, a title coveted even by warriors) to the responsible direction of a foreign campaign. To the annoyance of the army, John takes over the command from Alexius, and leads his force to Nice. There he secures Fort George on Lake Asernius, near which Nice is built, and holds a council of war to discuss its future conduct. Curticius (the hero of Calábrya) and George Palæologus, his uncle, recommend an immediate attack on the Sultan at Dorylæum. John insists on his sole

authority, and drags the army into a distressing plight, from which he is only rescued by George Palæologus. He repays this timely service by black ingratitude, and prejudices the emperor's mind against the worthiest of his captains. The court-party dared not repeat the experiment; no further levies were trusted either to a soldier or a civilian; and Melissenus (astonishing to relate) continued undisturbed to divide Hither Asia peaceably with the Turks into the reign of Alexius. So far from acting as a Roman patriot, he was a mere forerunner or jackal, preparing the way for the Turks. When he was removed the delusion was detected; under cover of a fictitious emperor, Soliman had quietly established his undisputed sway over all Asiatic provinces, from Cilicia to the Hellespont. The capital was fixed at Nice; the still Greek or Roman towns paid him their tribute, and perhaps hardly regretted the days of Nicephoritzes or Borilas. The Turk never proposes to administer; he is content to encamp and to enjoy. No violent catastrophe marked the insensible change of government. The "seven churches" and the dead or decaying metropoles of Ionia scarcely marked the gradual shifting from the rule of an emperor to that of a usurper,[1] and from this again to the control of a Turkish emir depending on Soliman the Seljuk. So abased was the imperial government, or so indifferent to a trifling inconvenience, that the ferry-dues insolently established on the Asiatic side by the half-Roman, half-Turkish power, were hardly resented. Certainly, no steps were taken to remove the oppressive toll-booths, the publicans who filled, or the unnatural alliance which supported them. In this extraordinary atmosphere of tolerance and half-heartedness ended the year 1080; and we have now reached the climax of our story.

Alexius declines to serve against him.

West Asia independent and aggressive.

[1] Could the boundary-line be so accurately drawn, and were not both wearers of the name Nicephorus?

The Ministers plot against Comnenians.

§ 8. The ministers, long jealous of the Comnenian clan, do not trouble to disguise their suspicion and dislike. The Empress Mary (wife of two sovereigns) formally adopts Alexius ; and her husband (no doubt at the instigation of the envious cabal) announces a nephew from Synnada as heir to the throne. The choice was by no means bad ; the son of the rich Asiatic noble Theodulus was youthful, accomplished, and vigorous. But the empress saw in Alexius the defender of her son's claims, the little Constantine XIII. At this juncture the ministers decided to get rid of Alexius and his kin, either by casting them as a prey to the Turks or by weaving a charge of attempted treason. Alexius is sent against the barbarians and their renegade "Roman" emperor to Cyzicus ; and the ministers work on the fears of the emperor. They point to the troops gradually collecting (at his own orders !) for the campaign, in the streets and barracks of the capital. Alexius contrives to reassure the emperor, who may perhaps have remembered that he was once a soldier and had risen to power as champion of the military interest. The rumour went that the insufferable Borilas himself designed to kill the emperor and seize the throne ; certainly it was agreed that he had marked out the whole Comnenian clan for ruin. Alexius then determined to forestall him. His companions and advisers are, significantly enough, an Armenian Bacouraon (Pacurians) and the nephew of Robert Guiscard, known to the Greeks under the patronymic of Humbertopoulus. On February 14, the later St. Valentine's Day, the party take their momentous step and leave the city. They collect at Tchourlu (Τζούρουλον), while their wives and children secure themselves in the safe and venerable asylum of Sophia. But the movement would have been incomplete, perhaps destined to utter failure, without the magic of the name and influence of Cæsar John. He had thrown off the monk's cowl,

and was occupying one of his country-seats in Thrace. An emissary entreated his sanction and approval for the enterprise. He starts to join the mutineers, and on the way annexes the treasure of a financial agent of the government and the alliance of a vagrant troop of Hungarians. The principal towns of Thrace (with the strange exception of Adrinople) declare for the insurgents; and they advance to the capital, encamping at Schiza, within six leagues. The warm appeal of Cæsar John and the unselfish affection of Isaac Comnenus enlisted all sympathy for Alexius. Constantine XII. was a tonsured monk, Constantine XIII. an infant; and the Cæsar, representing the whole Ducas interest, earnestly pleaded for the young champion of imperialism, whose merits had won so infamous a recompense. Isaac, in full sight of the army, invests the still reluctant Alexius with the imperial insignia; and these two by this act fix the policy and the succession of Byzantine royalty for a hundred years. "Nicephorus V." writes to congratulate Alexius on escaping the perfidious intrigue of miserable slaves, and suggests a division of the empire: but the negotiations came to nothing. The *fourth* Nicephorus trembled and lost heart: the Cæsar corrupts the German guard and gains admittance for the whole insurgent army. The entire city is abandoned to pillage, but life is spared. Botaneiates, failing in a message to Melissenus for aid, offers to adopt Alexius and transmit the crown to him, retaining only title and dignity, but surrendering active control. These offers (which could hardly have altered the status of the ineffective prince) came too late. The patriarch urged him to spare Christian bloodshed, and retire in obedience to Heaven's manifest will. The bodyguard still lined the avenues of the palace, and were prepared to resist; but like Pius IX., the last legitimate Nicephorus decided to abandon his cause. Wrapping his head in his mantle,

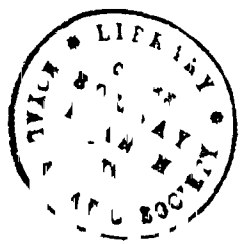
The Ministers plot against Comnenians.

Alexius invested.

Sack of the capital and resignation of Botaneiates (1081).

Sack of the capital and resignation of Botaneiates (1081).

and preceded by the scoffing Borilas, he takes the road to St. Sophia. Removed to the convent of Periblept, he receives the tonsure, and on his own confession regretted none of the pleasures or profits of empire but the use of meat, from which his new career debarred him. With the victory of the Comnenian clan begins a new era for the Roman Empire, which at least here we are not prepared to follow. The military caste had triumphed, and a potent family divided out amongst its members the extravagant titles, the steadily dwindling resources, and the real hard work of the empire. The sack of the capital, so bitterly deplored by Alexius and his daughter the historian, marks a real change in motives, ideals, and political aims; and we are warranted in fixing here the limit of our survey of the institutions of imperial Rome.



PART II

ARMENIA AND ITS RELATIONS WITH THE EMPIRE (520–1120)

THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE ARMENIAN ELEMENT

DIVISION A

GRADUAL ADMITTANCE (540-740)

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Interest of eighth century: Eastern dynasties of Rome and Armenia.

§ 1. UNDER the dynasty of the Heracliads the Balkan peninsula ceased to form an effective part of the empire; but Lesser Asia was recovered and consolidated. The great nursery of warlike princes in the Danubian provinces sent no more champions like Decius or Diocletian, like Constantius and his heirs, or Justinian and his nephew. Africa is lost by the year 700; and by 750 the resolute Constantine V. seems to have abandoned all interest in older Rome, and submitted with a strange tameness to the loss of the Exarchate. The scene of the active and decisive movements, which only find an echo or a reflection on the smaller Byzantine stage, is shifted eastwards and comprises the new Regiments of Asia Minor and the newly risen nation of Armenia. It is a matter of no great importance to decide whether Conon is an Isaurian or a Syrian; what is of interest is his undoubted connection with the land between the Caucasus and Lake Van. Now the eighth century witnesses a significant revival in the nationalities lying on the Eastern frontier. And the spring of their fresh and energetic vitality may be traced to the stir and commotion which followed the overthrow of the Persian Colossus and the establishment of the militant caliphate about the year 650.

An Armenian, Artavasdus, contended for the Byzantine throne just a century before the Bagratid dynasty arose under Ashot I. on the ruins of the

Interest of eighth century: Eastern dynasties of Rome and Armenia.

Caliphate: and an Arzrunian, Leo V., actually reigned for seven troubled years over the Roman Empire, long before his own family had established themselves in independence in their own country. The weakness of the successors of Harun gave a welcome opportunity for revival to the Armenian nationality, and enabled them to preserve a feudal liberty, to play a new and serious part in the politics of the East.

The Bagratid dynasty, with the rival family of Arzrunians in Vasparacania (908–1080), will provide two strong Christian principalities on the east of the "Roman" Empire down to the very last years of the period we are undertaking. A third fraction indeed, to the west of Lake Van, fell under the Muslim,—the Merwanidæ; and the relations of all three portions of Armenia oscillated between autonomy and vassalage to Byzantium or to Bagdad and his lieutenant at Melitenè. All were extinguished together at the close of our epoch (1080); and only in the mountain-fastnesses of Cilicia, in the safe asylum of Mount Taurus, did there linger on a semblance of Armenian sovereignty, expiring about fifty years before the fall of Constantinople (A.D. 1400) in the person of Leo VI., a refugee in the Parisian metropolis. Such is a hasty outline of the fortunes of the Armenian provinces from the advent of the "Isaurians" to the accession of Alexius Comnenus.

Early Armenian history: Arsacids and conversion of Tiridat (c. 300).

§ 2. It will be necessary to cast our eyes backward as well as forward if we wish to have a clear notion of the place occupied and the part played by this singular nationality. Armenia owes its renown and its integrity to the same family that so long bore sway in Parthia, the Arsacidæ. In 150 B.C. a Parthian sovereign established his brother there, and the line continued to the reigns of Theodosius II. and Valentinian III. (150 B.C. to A.D. 430). Such a State, midway between two great empires and often bearing the brunt of their quarrels, would bear a

doubtful allegiance to the courts of Rome and of Ctesiphon. It was to Armenia that the pride and tradition of the Arsacids retired after the triumph of the Sassanids in the reign of Severus II. (226). There the national or dynastic opposition to the new family (or tribe) sustained itself for some six years; and we may notice that the kingdom was reconstituted in the latter part of the century by Roman aid, and after a brief hostility under Tiridat accepted the Christian faith and practice. Himself of royal Arsacid descent, Gregory the Illuminator works for the conversion of his people; and before the great tenth persecution in the Roman Empire (*c.* 304 A.D.) Armenia had its Patriarch or Catholicus, and the Church could claim more than half the subjects as believers. Towards the close of the fifth century a division of interests or "spheres of influence" (such as divides Persia to-day between Russia and England) became necessary; and Theodosius authorised an amicable settlement with Persia; by which Pers-armenia had its Arsacid governor, owning allegiance to the State, and Roman Armenia, a similar native chieftain, owning fealty to Byzantium (*c.* 400 A.D.). The high-water mark of Roman influence was reached in the reign of Maurice, nearly two hundred years after (*c.* 600 A.D.), when, as Georgius of Cyprus clearly shows, a considerable advance of imperial frontier was made in the North and the Euphrates valley. In Persarmenia, indeed, the Arsacids were soon superseded by princes or satraps of Persian birth, who continued for just two centuries (*c.* 430–630 A.D.). The disastrous rupture in the orderly succession of the empire, and the internecine conflict of the Heraclian revival, tired out the two combatants in profitless warfare. Armenia in 650 yielded greatly to Saracen influence; and in the loose federalism of the early political system of Islam retained its native princes owning obedience to the caliph. The reign of Justinian II. is memorable for an attempt to

Early Armenian history; Arsacids and conversion of Tiridat (c. 300.)

Decay of Roman influence in seventh century.

Decay of Roman influence in seventh century.

recover independence, or rather to exchange the Arabian suzerainty for a Roman protectorate. But before the close of his first reign (by 695) the country is entirely subjected and Arab emirs replace the suspected native chieftains. Thus the last years of this century witness the loss of the African province and a curtailment of the "sphere of Roman influence" in the nearer East. For one hundred years all is confusion and disorder; and we again take up the records of this "ambiguous" people, as Tacitus calls it, in the renewed activity displayed under the Jewish (?) family of Ashod, who in the reign of the third Michael founded a power, which, with numberless vicissitudes and sundry changes of abode, lasts five and a half centuries till the latter days of the Palæologi (843–1393).

Armenian Non-conformity, obstacle to union.

§ 3. A strange fortune overtook this doubtful land and nation, belonging properly neither to West nor East, siding with the empire in general Christian belief, yet severed from a full sympathy and communion by an accident or a misunderstanding. For the Armenian Church remained in touch with Orthodoxy for barely a century and a half (300–450 A.D.). It did not accept the Articles of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) in the reign of Marcian; and so great was its detestation of the Nestorian heresy that it distorted some uncertain phrases in this Council's decisions into an acceptance of the hateful "Adoptianism," used language which savoured of Eutychianism (συμμῖξις, not ἕνωσις), and gradually drifted away from the great Establishment into a kind of provincial isolation. (And from this it may be said never to have successfully issued. Evangelised by the Jesuits and protected by the Russian Church and Government, it still preserves its solitude and its independence, and now and again extends tentative offers for reunion to the Protestant sects in Western Europe.) It was a feature of later Persian diplomacy to foster these religious schisms. The supposed Eutychians of

Armenia, and the followers of Nestorius, found the same favour and protection; and the advisers of the Shah were quite aware of the political value of an opposition to Byzantine orthodoxy. It was the first endeavour of Heraclius, warrior and theologian, to revive religious unity in the East, and rally the flagging patriotism of Armenia, Egypt, and Syria in the new crusade (*c.* 625). His failure belongs rather to the records of religious history than to my present design; and I am content here merely to remark the abortive effort,—which will be described more fully in a later section. But whatever the schism between the churches and the cleavage between Armenia and Byzantine speculation, nothing hindered the widening influence of the Armenian stock on the destinies of the empire. We may hazard the conjecture that in the singularly democratic or purely official society of the capital, *this* definite title to noble birth gave weight and influence. Plagues had decimated Byzantium in the middle of the sixth and eighth century. An artificial capital, artificially recruited, is exposed to violent changes and vicissitudes. In the reigns of Theodosius II., of Justinian I., of Constantine V., an entirely different population thronged the cities. The official nobility were subject to the same law of sterility and decay, inexorably awaiting comfort and opulence and that secure transmission of hereditary wealth, which was the chief pride (and perhaps the chief danger) of the empire. A primitive society is keenly alive to the claims of birth; and the Armenians might boast to find among themselves the "oldest and most illustrious families of Christendom." It is no wonder that Asiatic influence eclipsed the moribund traditions of Greece and Rome. The eighth century tells of the internecine conflict between Hellenism, enthroned in the Establishment, and the new Asiatic militarism, which, as the spirit of Cromwell's soldiers, represented a practical and Puritan piety. The newly stirring movement makes itself

Armenian Non-conformity, obstacle to union,

not to entry of Armenian into Roman service.

Armenian Non-conformity, obstacle to union, not to entry of Armenian into Roman service.

felt first perhaps in the revolt of Simbat or Sempad, under Justinian II.,—corrupted into some resemblance to a native Greek name, as Sabbatios or Symbatios (just as the titles of Gothic kings were insensibly accommodated to classic etymology as Theodoric, Theodatus). Under Constans III., an "Armeniac" general of Persian birth, Saborios had invited the Arabs to subdue Romania; and Sempad, although a Roman patrician and commander holding the same rank, exchanges his allegiance, and allows Southern Armenia to fall to the Arabs.

Armenian pretenders and sovereigns (700–850) at Byzantium.

§ 4. We may suppose that the Romanising party emigrated into the empire and the imperial service from a land overrun by unbelievers. At any rate, the influence of Armenia is henceforward continuous and consistent. Armenian birth seems to have been the chief recommendation of the idle and luxurious Vardan or Bardanitzes (Anon. Cod. Coislin.), who reigns as Philippicus (711–713); Leo III., if not a native in descent, possessed strong connection and affinity in Armenia, and his son-in-law, Artavasdus, is a typical Armenian noble. In 790, Alexius Muselè, governor of the Armeniac *theme*, is suspected of conspiring with his mutinous legions, and was flogged, tonsured, and blinded by the order of Constantine VI. These native (?) levies were the determined opposers of the claims of Irene; and the too dutiful emperor deprived himself of strong Armenian support when he insisted on the recognition of his Greek mother's title. Vardan, another compatriot, rebels against the first Nicephorus, and Arsaber, patrician and quæstor, who revolted in 808, belongs to the same race. Armenia has its first legitimate ruler in Ghevond, who ruled as Leo V. from 813 to 820, son-in-law of Arsaber. And in this connection a citation from Father Chamich's history[1] should not be omitted:

[1] St. M. on Lebeau, vol. xii. 355, 409, 431.

"In this age, three Armenians were raised at different times to the imperial throne of the Greeks. Two of them, Vardan and Arshavir, only held this lofty station for a few days. The third, Levond, an Arzrunian, reigned seven years. Not long after Prince Manuel, of the Mamigonian tribe, won great renown with the emperor Theophilus for his warlike skill and valour." This Arzrunian family with which Leo V. claims connection was supposed to have issued from the parricide sons of Esarhaddon, Adrammelech and Sharezer.

Armenian pretenders and sovereigns (700–850) at Byzantium.

The Mamigonian Manuel became a member of the Council of Regency during Michael III.'s minority; and it was necessary to support the claims of that extraordinary upstart, Basil "the Macedonian," by appealing to his ancient descent from Armenian royalty. This curious fiction was a concession to the Asiatic and aristocratic prejudice then dominant in Constantinople; and is the strongest testimony that we possess to the complete seizure of the government in the middle of the ninth century by Armenian personality and tradition.

§ 5. After this short and general survey we shall examine each period in detail, from the age of Justinian to the last years of our allotted span, and even encroach on the Comnenian period, and surpass the limits of the eleventh century. From this inquiry we invite adhesion to the following conclusions: (1) That the Armenians succeeded to the place and functions of the Pannonian or Illyrian sovereigns (250–678), and became the defenders of the imperial frontier on the East; (2) that this race, strenuous, prolific, and feudal, formed a compact military party, in whose eyes the prestige of the empire and the survival of Roman culture depended on the generous nourishment of national armies and defence; (3) that to the scanty and precarious barbarian levies of the time of Belisarius succeeded a native force of provincial militia, recruited in the

Summary of conclusions.

Summary of conclusions.

countries they defended (during the development of the *thematic* system, *c.* 650–800); (4) that the vitality of the empire was due not so much to the useful rôle of the civilian prefect and judge (a class almost extinct by 650), as to the new vigour and loyal allegiance of the Armenian immigrants and settlers; (5) that this warrior-class, handing on military skill and valour from father to son, maintained a silent but truceless conflict with Greek orthodoxy, monachism, and the civilians who starved the war-chest; (6) that later Byzantine history becomes an interesting spectacle of the vicissitudes of this contest, and culminates (it may be said) in the scandalous treatment of Romanus IV. (1071); (7) that the whole spirit of this invading race was "feudal," that is, attached great weight to descent, family connection, landed possessions, and vassals; (8) that feudalism infects (or transforms) the Roman institutions, presenting us with the glorious epic of Phocas, Zimisces, and Basil, and the constant pretensions of certain noble families, if not to sovereignty, at least to actual and responsible control; (9) that, while as a rule nationality and local prejudice vanish in the lofty atmosphere of the throne, the Byzantine monarchs are Armenian in actual birth or unmistakable sympathies; (10) that the strong armies of the Eastern frontier are the chief (if not the invariable) arbiters of the succession, and are seen to dictate heirs to a failing, or policy to an incompetent, dynasty, from 700 to the accession of the Comneni.[1]

[1] Feudalism implies a union of land-tenure, warlike exercises, and that personal loyalty which attaches the strong to the service of an individual, at a time when the notion of the abstract State or Commonwealth is incomprehensible. Gelzer (in his "Abstract of Byzantine Imperial History") may indeed complain that under Zimisces (969) we have to note a retrogression of empire and an expansion of feudalism, while the Roman *military* and *civil* State takes on a *military* and *aristocratic* aspect. But he might have placed this obvious and significant symptom much earlier. The Pretenders of the ninth century belonged to the new military caste, enriched by ample allotment of vacant land in the east of Lesser Asia. The throne of the Amorian sovereigns (820–867) is supported by heroes

I

EARLY HISTORY OF ARMENIA DOWN TO THE FIRST PERIOD OF JUSTINIAN I. (540 A.D.)

Armenia in the new expert service of Rome.

§ 1. The real centre and interest of this period in the imperial history lies in the East. The connection with the West is largely artificial. Justinian reconquered the ancient capital, and Leo III. lost it; but these events had little influence on men and society in the East, certainly none upon the political development which we are now attempting to trace. Never did the city of Constantine look westward; she preserved, and still maintains to-day, her persistent Orientation. The men who by adoption joined the Roman Commonwealth, and entered into the Roman tradition with eager loyalty, were not Italians, will soon cease even to be Thracians and Illyrians, or even Dardanians and Pannonians of the hardy Balkan stock of Decius, Diocletian, Valentinian, and the house of Justin. The empire (as we so often have occasion to remark) was *specialist* and *supra-national*. It knew nothing of race or family,

of Asiatic breed and Roman traditions. Nor, again, is it possible for the historian to regret the new anti-centralising and anti-civil tendencies. Great posts became once more almost sovereign, at least vassal, States. The peace-party of menials and officials offered no substitute for an aggressive policy which was also the most prudent course. Praise has been lavished on the civil service of the empire; yet it is but just to apportion the merit carefully between the two rival departments. The conquests of the feudal or chivalrous party enabled the civilians to enjoy and monopolise the world's riches (960–1025) for half a century unchallenged. But the war-party alone understood the true needs of the State, and, judging from their actual experience, would not be put off by the real or affected ignorance of a historian like Psellus or a dilettante like Constantine Ducas (1059–1067). The strong arm was still indispensable for the maintenance of law and order, for that civilian procedure which existed nowhere else on earth except in China. There is little sign of mere feudal anarchy and individualism in the great Armenian champions of the empire; but the official class and the clergy hated and feared them. Feudalism gave the empire a long respite and a glorious sunset; and it was not the fault of the Comneni, but of the age, that they became the unwilling destroyers of the old Roman system.

Armenia in the new expert service of Rome.

and at this time little of creed or religion—for the ministers and historians of Justinian are dubious Christians—and the great code is singularly free from all traces of Christian influence. Work had to be done, and it mattered little who performed it. But it must be well done; continuous training, and a sort of school—of law, of arms, or of letters—became the rule. The army-corps in the anarchy of 235–285 kept alive the memories of Roman discipline, a certain patriotic simplicity, and some rough rules of honour. Constantine's civil service, and the punctilious ranks and duties of the court, had inculcated a definite and immobile routine. The growing demand for central supervision resulted in a body of civilians without initiative, but singularly faithful to a corporate spirit which dictated all their phrases and acts. The ecclesiastical caste naturally existed as a thing apart, and drew to itself those who were excluded from the other branches of State service. The unhappy curial colleges were kept alive and compact not merely by direct and tyrannical force, but by the whole tendency of a specialising age. The military caste (of which Justinian, perhaps not unwisely, showed some distrust) formed another well-trained corps, solid and continuous in method, precise in promotion. Who are the new actors on the scene? Who, in the dearth of recruits or violent depopulation of the empire, will take up the different posts as representatives of the imperial tradition? It will be found that at least in one department of State the land of Armenia is closely concerned. From the time of Justinian onwards, the best soldiers of the empire will be Armenians. Usurpers and pretenders, too, will belong to the same race, and when the throne is vacant there will seldom be wanting an Armenian candidate. The customs and beliefs of this remote country will exercise the strongest influence on "Rome." Here will be learned the lessons of defence from a feudal military caste

which had long been extinct within the borders of the empire. There will enter into Roman life a foreign element not to be gainsaid, which will take the place of the Teutons, Heruls, and Gepids who had once formed the heart of the Roman armies. There will be witnessed a silent but resolute duel between the Hellenic spirit, now orthodox-Christian, and the simpler Protestantism of the Armenian mountaineers. The eighth and ninth centuries will be the chief scene of this conflict; the attempt of Iconoclasm to revert to a religious practice and belief, simpler and more Roman. From Armenia came also (1) the tendency to hereditary succession in the imperial title, and in the great feudal estates of Asia Minor; (2) the strong military and aggressive spirit which awoke in the Basilian house the fires of old Roman conquest; and (3) that strangely un-Roman principle of the *Shogunate* that would reserve the chief dignity to a certain family, but deliver effective control to a colleague or recognised generalissimo. The competition for this latter post, not to be settled but by the sword, will lead to that clan-rivalry of warlike families which issues in the victory of the Comneni. And it is here I have ventured to place the extinction of the genuine imperial tradition. It is my present purpose to inquire into this gradual admission of Armenians into the armies and society of "Rome"; to trace in the tedious wars with Persia the real cause of the futile and inconclusive strife; and to examine the part played by this new nationality in the East, that succeeded to the championship of the empire which was undertaken in the West by the Teutonic race.

Armenia in the new expert service of Rome.

§ 2. The turning-point in the relations of Armenia and Rome was the conversion of King Tiridat in the third century. In this acceptance of the Christian faith Armenia took the lead, and set an example which Rome under Constantine was not slow to follow. It is undoubted that this community of

Christianity, source both of alliance and of estrangement.

Christianity, source both of alliance and of estrangement.

creed brought the country into closer connection with the Romans, and severed it from its natural allies and neighbours. Yet the peculiar form finally taken by Armenian Christianity served rather to isolate than to bring their Church into a full Christian fellowship. Especially under Heraclius are the separatist tendencies of all Eastern Christians apparent. Neither Syria nor Egypt nor Armenia recognised the established church of the capital with its Hellenic orthodoxy; and it was disunion and jealousy between these branches that admitted the infidels so easily. Still, the immigration of the warrior class, and the constant interference of Rome in Armenian affairs, were largely due to this common belief. The Arsacid Christian monarchy confronted the new Sassanid dynasty, predominant since 226 in Persia, a Magian revival, and entirely hostile to the Arsacid house. The extension of Persian influence implied the propaganda of fire-worship and the persecution of converts to the Gospel, sometimes even of native and hereditary Christians. These were thrown into the arms of Rome; and Armenia was an occasional *casus belli*, and a constant source of suspicion and disquiet between the two empires, as will readily be seen in the ensuing sketch. Thus religion partly united and partly severed this debatable country from the body of the empire. But in spite of the curious vassaldom and imperial investiture under early Cæsars, the real intercourse did not begin until both powers had adopted a common religious belief. To make clear the character of this preponderating influence on the Eastern world, I shall have to go back to very primitive times to account for the peculiar features of Armenian society and civilisation.

Origin and early history of the Armenians.

§ 3. Various modern writers (amongst others Wilamowitz-Möllendorff) refer the origin of this people to a great Phrygio-Thracian immigration from the West. The rough "Dorians" had ousted an earlier

culture, and established themselves in its place; survivors who escaped serfdom travelled eastwards. But the Phrygio-Thracian tribes went farther, and became the ancestors of the Armenian race.[1] Their own traditions, wildly improbable as history, are curiously typical of their native belief; they sprang from Haik, son of Thargamus—the Togarmah of Scripture, grandson of Noah, and were thus Iapetids, their earliest indigenous dynasty being certainly traced to Japhet.[2] But two chief clans boasted of a singular and perhaps discreditable descent; from the intercourse of David and Bathsheba, as yet illicit, or from the parricides of Sennacherib, Adrammelech and Sharezer, "who fled into the land of Armenia" after their father's murder. Clan-feeling, intense pride in families developing into tribal chieftaincy, and finally into feudal principality, such is the chief note of Armenian society. And it is little wonder that in such an assembly of equal tribes no one family should have attained supremacy; in a proud and feudal community a foreign dynasty must rule, because no one single member will submit to an equal. The difficulties as well as the vitality of the Armenian race will be due to strong, jealous, and exclusive pride. It has a sense of nationality unknown in the artificial "Roman" commonwealth, which asked no questions about birth. It was ruled by turbulent nobles, full of vigour and public spirit; whereas Rome, since the adoption of an *imperial* government, had set itself to weaken the pride of caste and the power of families, substituting for claims of descent an

Origin and early history of the Armenians.

[1] The Armenians were not without affinity to the Phrygians in the central plateau of Asia Minor, and these again are allied to the inhabitants of Thrace and Macedonia. These peoples are *non-Oriental* in their character and culture; and Armenian history is the struggle of an outpost of the West.

[2] The Seljukian Turks are equally confident of their origin from the scriptural patriarchs. The Ghuss (Οὔζοι) tribe traced back to Ghuss, son or grandson of Japhet (Yafeth), son of Noah (Nuh). The enemies of the Ghussidæ believed that this early hero had stolen the *rain-stone*, which Turk, also a son of Japhet, inherited from his father.

Origin and early history of the Armenians.

official hierarchy where personal cleverness went for everything. It is easy to foresee the result of the fusion of the two. The later period of Roman history is the record of a long contest: on the one hand, the ministry of isolated instruments, the eunuch-celibate or the priest; on the other, the closely knit family: the ideal state and the feudal clan. Victory will lie with the more natural association; the last two centuries before Alexius are just the chronicle of notable generations, not merely on the throne, but in the military class, in the great land-holding section which was now refusing to be a mere payer of taxes.

Rivals of Assyria.

As late as the accomplished Orientalist, Saint Martin, the old legend of Semiramis, her visit, conquest, and death in Armenia had to be fitted in somehow. Instead, modern research gives us the historic kingdom of Urartu, round about Lake Van, wresting provinces from Assyria during the throes of revolution (*c.* 750 B.C.); Tiglath Pileser marching in reprisal against Sarduris II. at the head of a powerful confederacy, and defeating (744), with a capture of 73,000 prisoners; ten years later assaulting Turushpa, Sarduris' capital city on Lake Van; Rusas, the new King of Ur, again, under Sargon, stirring up the Hittite neighbours to rivalry (716, 715), and even sowing sedition in the northern provinces of Assyria; seeing his allies one by one reduced, flying to impenetrable mountain-plateaux in Armenia, and at last falling on his sword in despair. This Haikian (or earliest native) dynasty was not without its mythical or actual glory. Tigranes (Dikran) is the equal ally of Cyrus, as Barvir had revolted against Assurbanipal.[1] It was

[1] A general summary of chief events: Assault of Assyria under *Tigl. Pil. I.* begins 1100. *Shalmanezer II. first* to plan annexation, 860, and Arame's dynasty ends. Sarduris I. begins a new house, and resists Assyria, 850–830. *Shalm. III.* makes six ineffectual expeditions, *c.* 780. Argistis and Sarduris II. continue to humble Assyria and annex territory. *Tigl. Pil. III.* curbs and reduces to old limits, *c.* 735. Argistis II. reduced to a small district round Lake Van.

brought to a close only by the irresistible march of Alexander (328). Subject to the Seleucid monarchy, Armenia broke into rebellion and secured a short period of autonomy (*c.* 318–285 B.C.), and just a century later declared its independence of Antiochus the Great under its governor Artaxias (190). Fifty years later again, the Parthian sovereign put his brother Val-arsaces on the throne, and the great Arsacid dynasty begins in the latter branch, which far outlasts the better-known house of Persia. Tigranes, son-in-law of Mithradates of Pontus, reigns over Syria, Greater and Lesser Armenia, and some Parthian provinces; is entangled in the quarrel with Rome (which first brings the two powers into connection); and is allowed by Pompey, the capable reorganiser of the East, to retain the North and Centre, resigning to his son the accretions in the South-west, Sophenè and Gorduenè. About the middle of the first century B.C. Armenia came into collision with the curiously assorted sovereigns of Egypt; Artavasdus, defeated and taken to Alexandria by Antony, is put to death by Cleopatra in 30 B.C. Then ensued a time of feudal anarchy, one hundred and seventy princely families fighting with each other and raising up (as Tacitus tells us in "Annals," ii.) some fitful shadow-kings in rapid succession. Germanicus solemnly invests one with the diadem at Artaxata in A.D. 17; and already the country is more akin to Rome than to Parthia *nimium vicina*. Yet it was ready enough to give welcome to the cast-out Arsacid Artaban (possibly on account of his Roman education as well as his undoubted lineage). Under Nero and Vespasian, Erovant I. (*c.* 60–80), Arsacid on the female side, unites Armenia and builds two cities, Erovantoshad and Pakaran; and Ardashir (of a more legitimate Arsacid line) appears later under the alternate suzerainty of Rome and Parthia, scarcely recognisable in the historians as Exedarus.

The Arsacid dynasty (150 B.C.–200 A.D.).

Romans and Persians in Armenia: independence extinguished (385).

§ 4. In the first quarter of the third century A.D., the northern branch of the Arsacids had been more powerful than the southern. Chosroes the Great of Armenia takes up arms on behalf of his cousins against the Sassanids (226); but on his murder by a renegade member of his own clan, Armenia passed under the victor's yoke (250), easily yielding to foreign sway owing to its feudal distractions. Tiridat of the ousted line, son of Chosroes, flies to Rome, common asylum, like Paris to-day, for displaced monarchs; and the burlesque Augustan historians of this period say nothing to the point on an event so pregnant with grave issues. It was perhaps this restoration to his father's throne by Roman help that explains the extreme bitterness of Sapor against the empire; the captivity and death of Valerian. The new king, at first, like Decius and Aurelian, a persecutor of the Christians, meets Gregory the Illuminator, national hero of the story of Armenian evangelisation. The saint cures the king, and converts the people. For just a century onwards, until the "first partition" under Theodosius (385), Armenia is a scene of perpetual conflict between Rome and the Sassanids. It cost the lives of two emperors, Valerian and Julian (261, 363); and Jovian, after the latter's death, has to purchase a safe retreat by the disgraceful surrender of five provinces beyond the Euphrates, with the important and thoroughly Roman frontier-towns, Nisibis and Singara, and the fertile lands of Arzanenè and Gorduenè. The treaty of Theodosius definitely ceded all fanciful or legitimate rights over Eastern or Greater Armenia, and incorporated Lesser Armenia into the empire (385). But neither province received an alien viceroy; in both a scion of the Arsacids was set up as a governor or vassal-prince; Arsaces III. in Roman, Chosroes III. in Pers Armenia, as it is henceforth habitually called. From this year may be dated the gradual infiltration of the Armenian

race into Roman territory, expelled by religious intolerance or encouraged by the military prizes of the empire. The century (400–500) from Arcadius to Anastasius passed without any protracted warfare between the two great powers; and we are prepared to accept the story that Arcadius begged Isdigerd (succ. *c.* 400) to become tutor and guardian to his son, in spite of Agathias' denial; did not Heraclius appeal in like manner to the chivalrous feeling of the Avar Khan, when he left young Heraclius-Constantine as regent in a capital almost denuded of garrison? Did not Cabades propose in vain to the prosaic Justin I. that he should adopt Chosroes, and did not the refusal precipitate the war, long preparing, between the two rivals? Armenia, "perpetual source of annoyance" (as Bury rightly calls it), was undoubtedly the cause of the brief war under Theodosius II. (420–1). It was the old story; Varanes II. had attempted to proselytise Persarmenia, and had begun a persecution of Christians. Nothing happened of any consequence; it rarely did in these interminable and purposeless wars on the Euphrates. Peace for a hundred years was finally proclaimed by the optimistic diplomats of the two kingdoms (422). In 428 the government of Persarmenia was altered; instead of a native prince, a Persian governor or *Martzban* was sent. It is possible to explain this in two ways; (1) either (as Bury supposes) the Armenians begged the king to send a polite foreigner in place of an unpopular member of the old royal line (a request by no means uncommon or unnatural); or (2) the tyrannical sovereign extinguished the last embers of independence by annexing on the same footing as all other Persian provinces. Isdigerd II. (440) is very anxious to convert Armenia to the Zoroastrian faith, but meets with no success, chiefly owing to the staunchness of the Mamigonian clan (a notable house throughout Armenian history, and, if rumour may

Romans and Persians in Armenia: independence extinguished (385).

The religious difficulty (400–500).

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be believed, deriving descent from a Chinese outlaw and immigrant of the dispossessed Han dynasty !)[1] Balas, the next Sassanid, wisely gave back liberty of conscience and worship in Armenia, and restored the status to that of vassal-ally; Vahan (Βαάνης) the Mamigonian is made prince-governor, and the step taken in 428 (whatever its significance) reversed. Balas died in 487, four years before Zeno the Isaurian, bequeathing peace to the rival empires and internal contentment to Armenia.

Cabades the Socialist renews the war with Rome.

§ 5. Plato's dream and prayer has rarely been realised or granted; a philosopher-king is happily a rarity, and invariably a disappointment. Neither Marcus nor Julian could encourage (by their example or success) the exercise of reflection upon a throne; for while their virtues were their own, their failures may be distinctly traced to their creeds. But it is recorded of one Roman emperor and one Sassanid king that they desired to put in practice the theories laid down in Plato's ideal commonwealth. Gallienus was prepared to assent to Plotinus' request for the loan of a ruinous Italian city, that a model community, like the Quakers or Oneidists, might be tested. Cabades, the new king of Persia, fell under the influence of a convinced and earnest Socialist, a strange and repulsive amalgam of the Socrates and the Thrasymachus of the "Republic." He bears a curious resemblance to a certain Chinese statesman, Waganchi, who likewise converted a despot, and received license to put his views in force over the vast and silent population. This alliance of despotism with Socialist visions is therefore no novelty; indeed it is perhaps the only expedient by

[1] Colonies of Chinese are by no means unknown in Armenia. Was the famous Georgian royal family Chinese in origin? About 250 A.D., when the Goths, sweeping Europe, were about to annihilate Decius and his army, comes into the western part of Asia a Han of royal descent; in 260, Tiridates gives him the province or district of Taron, of which mention will be frequent. His name was Mam-kon, and he became the head of the Mamigonian clan.

which these views can ever be imposed on mankind, in themselves curiously unsatisfying to every human instinct. Men are neither born equal, nor do they believe themselves to be so; and it is only under a despotism where all are alike slaves, that the automatism and docility, requisite for the Socialistic order, can be found. Cabades, carefully preserving his own autocracy, like Frederic of Prussia or Joseph II., posed as the enlightened foe of privilege, the apostle of Liberalism. "Women and property must be held in common; so-called 'crimes' are merely the artificial creation of an unjust society; and right and wrong lie elsewhere than in the conventional standard." The nobles, about the close of the century, united to depose a monarch holding such views, and left him ample leisure to enjoy a practical application of his own tenets. Restored (not unlike Justinian II. two centuries after) by the aid of the Huns to his "unequal" and privileged rank (500), he showed more caution, reserved his free-thought and anarchic dreams for private, and perhaps seized with eagerness an occasion for renewing the Roman war. The pretext was the arrears in the Roman subsidy, promised for the joint defence of the Caspian gates or passes of Caucasus. Tradition made out that Cabades was offended, because the prudent old money-lender Anastasius refused a loan, intended to pay off his dangerous "Ephthalite" allies. At any rate, in 502, eighty years after the hundred years' peace, hostilities broke out; and Persia was soon in possession of the cities of the march-land, Martyropolis, Theodosiopolis, and Amida. Competent authorities believe (and I am content to accept their judgment) that in the next ensuing three years of war the Roman side was at a disadvantage, chiefly owing to the jealous policy of dividing the supreme command. Still, Celer the Illyrian, *magister officiorum* (why not *militum?*) achieved some success in Arzanenè and recovered

Cabades the Socialist renews the war with Rome.

Cabades the Socialist renews the war with Rome.

the fortress of Amida ; while in 507 Anastasius built the great citadel Dara on the site of a tiny village. (We may perhaps here notice the last Roman champions from the Balkans. We have this Illyrian ; twenty years later we find Belisarius in command in Persia, a Slav from "Germania," a Teutonic colony in Illyricum ; nearly forty years later (544) we find in an Eastern command Nazares from Illyria, *τῶν ἐν Ἰλλυρίοις στρατιωτῶν ἄρχων.* But in spite of Heruls and Gepids in the hasty levies of the famous general, the day for Goths or Teutons is over in the Eastern empire. We shall read of no more Thracians, Dacians, or Dardanians ; the house of Justin, extinct in 578, is succeeded by an Asiatic, Maurice the Cappadocian, from Arabissus, almost within Lesser Armenia. So on the palace-guard of sturdy Thracians have followed levies of strange Isaurians and Armenians, who to the number of nearly 4000 keep watch in Justinian's palace.[1])

Feudal policy of Justin, 520, and eastern campaigns of Belisarius.

§ 6. It was Justin I., about 520, who initiated or rather revived the policy of welcoming ethnic kings as vassals under the suzerainty of the empire ; Tzath, king of the Lazi of Colchis, being received under its protection, after paying a kind of feudal homage. Persia found a new motive for war in this interference with her natural allies or subjects ; under Justinian I. a great army 30,000 strong invaded and ravaged Mesopotamia, while Belisarius, now appearing for the first time, suffered a defeat. In 529 Persians, with their Saracen ally Alamundarus, plunder the country up to Antioch ; and Belisarius in the Roman reprisals of the ensuing year wins his first laurels at Dara,—notable as the first defeat of the Persians for many years. The new emperor had started his Eastern policy by appointing a *magister militum* for Armenia (*στρατηλάτης*) ; Sittas, husband of Theodora's sister, Comito, held the office; but in 530 Dorotheus was

[1] Though when the dignity was sold to peaceable but conceited civilians, the guard was found to exist only on paper.

acting as his lieutenant. Nor was Justinian backward in securing other loyal and gratuitous allies for the frontier; he gave the title of *patricius* (as Anastasius to Clovis) to Arethas (Harith), king of the Ghassanid Bedawins and ancestor (?) of Emperor Nicephorus I. (802–811). This chieftain continued a faithful ally of Rome during a long reign (530–572), as a contemporary of Chosroes (530–579). Once more Persians and Alamundar raid in 531, and after the doubtful result of the battle of Callinicum, Belisarius was recalled; it is difficult to say whether justly. For clearly the suspicious policy of divided command thwarted any united action. Mundus the Gepid succeeds him; and the new king Chosroes is quite content to make an Endless Peace, while the subsidy (11,000 lbs. of gold) is faithfully promised on the part of Rome for the defence of the Caucasian passes. But the brilliant successes of Justinian's early years, over faction at home and Goth and Vandal abroad, roused Chosroes' envious fear (540). The Gothic king Vitiges sent envoys to the Persian court to implore help against the common danger, the universal autocrat; and the two distant wars have an appreciable influence on each other. The despairing struggle of Gothic freedom is lengthened out by the diversion of troops to the East; it is hard to say in which quarter the efforts of Rome's "only general" were the more needed.

Feudal policy of Justin, 520, and eastern campaigns of Belisarius.

§ 7. It is possible to trace to the fiscal system of Rome the reaction of the middle period (540–550) which set back the triumphs of Justinian in East and West. Alexander the Logothete estranged loyal Italy and let in the Goths again; Armenia is found denouncing the exactions of the collectors, and professing her willingness to acknowledge Chosroes. It does not become one who lives under the perils of a democratic budget and the costliness of popular government to speak hastily of Roman imperial finance. Where we have accurate figures the amount would

Cause of Justinian's failure in East and West: fiscal system.

Cause of Justinian's failure in East and West: fiscal system.

not seem excessive; but it is clear that the passage from the intermittent suzerainty of barbarian king or even Sassanid to an expensive system of centralised officialism must seem vexatious and oppressive. It would be mere impertinence for any modern writer in a "free" State to blame the empire (or censure a "despotic" form of rule) for showing the natural and inevitable tendency of civilised society; namely, to centre in the State all the resources of citizens, all the springs of action, all the natural riches of the country. The Roman Empire in this sixth century was absolutely *modern*, and indeed democratic in tone and attitude; it overrated its strength, and undertook the colossal burden which mischievous dreamers to-day would have us transfer from collective shoulders to an irresponsible centre. It multiplied its duties and functionaries: the subject class paid. Italy, under the mild control of Gothic king or the benevolent pauperism of the Holy See, was ill-prepared for the new demands. Armenia, a feudal society (as we must again repeat), regarded even a modest contribution to imperial needs as an imposition and a disgrace. Amazaspes, the Roman governor, was slain by Acacius, and such was the Roman weakness or preoccupation elsewhere, that he was allowed to succeed his victim. But the demagogue in responsible office is a curious spectacle (as we may learn from Sardou's *Rabagas*). Money had to be collected, and the indignant and protesting Acacius was now the collector; he too was killed, and Sittas, sent on a message of conciliation, shares the same fate. Armenia appeals to Chosroes for help; and could point to the encroachments of Rome, as proof of a real danger to Persia; for Justinian had reduced the wild Pontic tribe of the Tzanni and had set a *dux* over the military forces of Lazica. For the next few years the real centre of the eastern cyclone lies in this remote kingdom.

The details of this Lazic war, told with leisured

and scholarly grace by Agathias, passed over with weariness by Gibbon, retold with redundant minuteness by Lebeau, and again with critical judgment by Bury,—need not detain us now. Like most episodes in the long feud of Rome and Parthia, it has no conclusion, no meaning at first sight; a mere desultory skirmish over a "sphere of influence" claimed simultaneously by two great powers. Yet grave interests were at stake. It was a part of the great imperialist policy of Justinian to secure vassals and allies on the outskirts of the realm. His uncle had set the example; and perhaps the astute nephew had secretly inspired. The friendship of the Lazic king would secure Roman Armenia and act as a set-off to Persian influence. Justinian was penurious in the extreme of the lives of his citizen-soldiers, of the number of troops on a foreign expedition, of the initiative or responsibility entrusted to individual commanders. He welcomed gladly any substitute for his own dear troops or suspected generals. The Lazi, the Tzans, the Apsilians become dependent on the empire; chieftains of Herul and Hun are baptized, the emperor, as it were, standing sponsor; the Caucasian Abasgi and the Nobadæ are converted, and to complete the isolation of Persia, bishops and clergy are sent to the Axumites. The king of Iberia comes to the capital and is received with rich gifts by Justinian and Theodora. The spread of Christianity was part of Justinian's imperialism: he was pope as well as Cæsar.

Cause of Justinian's failure in East and West: fiscal system.

II

RELATIONS OF ROME AND ARMENIA FROM JUSTINIAN TO HERACLIUS (540–620)

§ 1. Such a policy of Imperialism, flattering to these remote princes allied to the majesty of Rome, bore immediate fruit. An Army List of Justinian's later years would display in a striking manner the

Loyal service of Armenia to the empire: in the East and Italy.

Loyal service of Armenia to the empire: in the East and Italy.

predominance of Armenians. In 540, the garrison of Sura on the Euphrates is under an Armenian commandant; so too with the fleet of Thrace two years later. Phazas the Iberian prince has an important post in the Eastern armies; he is nephew of Peranes, the son of the Iberian king Gourgenes, at this time a refugee at Constantinople (in whose name it is difficult to avoid tracing the later name of the inland Caucasian country). In the same year (542) Belisarius sent on a mission in the East Adolius, son of the assassin Acacius; and we wonder that Armenian families should have given up their own names and adopted the weak quadrisyllables of the later empire. In 543, when Chosroes thought of attacking the Roman province by way of Pers-armenia, we find in the Roman army, 30,000 strong, Narses of the Camsar clan, and Isaac, brother of Adolius.[1] In the familiar weakness of the Roman command, the two confederate generals have little chance; Narses is killed in battle, and Peranes the Iberian seeking to ravage Taron (Ταραύνων Χώρια), on south and west of Lake Van, has to return from a successful foray on news of the defeat.—The result of the confederacy of East and West against Rome is evident when the Lazic troubles begin (545). The costly system of frontier forts, Martyropolis, Satala, Sebastè, Colonia, and others, overtaxed Justinian's treasury, and an expensive restoration relaxed the vigour of the Italian war. But the emperor was perhaps more than indemnified by the loyal service of Armenians far from their homes. Isaac an Armenian, of Camsar and Arsacid families, brother of Narses

[1] It is at this point that we may notice the emphatic witness of Procopius to the prosperous state of Armenia under Persian sway; Dovin, or Δούβιος, the capital, is eight days' journey from Theodosiopolis (Arzeroum), and stands in a smiling and fertile plain, covered with thriving villages at short intervals on a high-road busy with mercantile traffic between India and China and the West. Dovin is near the site of ancient Artaxata and lies north of the Araxes: it maintained its dignity as the capital for eight hundred years.

(who fell fighting in the East); Gitacius with a small band of Armenian fellow-countrymen, "who knew nothing but his native tongue" (as Procopius tells us); Pacurius, grandson of Gourgenes, the Iberian ex-king, and son of Peranes; Varazes with a little cohort of eighty; and Phazas, cousin of Pacurius, already seen in Roman service in 542;—such are the Oriental officers in Italy.—But we must turn once more to the East (549) and the Lazic entanglement. Gubazes the king is the son of a "Roman" wife; it being a long-established custom (ἐκ παλαίου) for the Lazic dynasty to accept honorary posts in the imperial palace and to marry with the daughters of senators on the emperor's choice or approval. It is quite possible that Gubazes may have actually served in person as a *Silentiarius;* though in a later age similar posts, as that of *Curopalat,* were purely titular and implied no duties. Indeed, though he had been for long a vassal of Persia, he demanded, naïvely enough, the payment of arrears of salary as Usher of the Palace since his accession to the throne! For the Persian yoke was unpopular (οὐκ αὐτογνωμονοῦντες, Procop.); and when Chosroes tried to murder Gubazes, the country flung itself into the arms of Rome. Mermeroes a Persian, forced to retire, begins tedious intrigue (551) against the Romans; and until 555 there are ceaseless and indecisive hostilities.—We may notice here the sub-infeudation then prevalent; the little peoples of Scymnia and Swania, in the interior of the Caucasus, are subject to the Lazic king, but are governed by native princes bound to homage (ἄρχοντες . . . τῶν ὁμοεθνῶν). When the tribal headship is vacant, word is sent to the Lazic king, who is then empowered by the Roman emperor to invest whom he will, provided it be one of the same tribe. It is clear that the ascending hierarchy of feudal obligation was well known to the Eastern peoples of the sixth century.

Loyal service of Armenia to the empire: in the East and Italy.

The Vassal State of Lazic and sub-infeudation.

Armenian valour in Africa: first Armenian plot: recall and conspiracy of Artaban (548).

§ 2. Meantime, Armenian bravery had not been without employment in Africa. Here, as in Italy, the first rapid successes had been followed by disastrous reaction. In 543 we find the two sons of John the Arsacid despatched, John and Artaban; and this family would seem to have passed into the imperial service when Arzanenè had thrown off the Persian yoke and surrendered to Rome. John was soon killed by the mutinous Moors; but for Artaban was reserved a romantic and troubled career. With his nephew Gregoras and Ardashir (Artaxerxes) he joins, or pretends to join, the curious rebellion of Gontharis the τύραννος in Carthage. But seizing a fit moment they murder the rebel and his friends, and shout the loyal salutations to Justinian. As a reward of this service Artaban is allowed to leave his post and return to the capital, lured by the fascinating Prejecta, a member of the imperial family. But disappointed passion or ambition made him a conspirator (548). Theodora, finding that he is already married, disposes otherwise of Prejecta, and forces him to take back his earlier and rejected spouse, also of Arsacian descent (ὁμόφυλος). Artabanus in high dudgeon listened to the murmurs of a youthful kinsman, Arsaces, who had been publicly whipped and paraded through the streets on a camel for treasonable correspondence with the Persian court. Smarting with the disgrace, Arsaces dwelt lightly on his own wrongs, but dilated rather on national grievances, the unhappy condition of those Armenians who fell a prey to the Roman tax-gatherer. They decide to assassinate Justinian; the plot is discovered; and the mild emperor is content with despoiling Artaban of his dignity and confining his impetuous relatives within the palace for a time. I would throw no doubts on the mercifulness of an untiring prince and a good man; but we may well suppose that a fear of offending the powerful Armenian contingent would reinforce the "imperial clem-

ency,"—one of the most glorious and truthful titles in use for the later Cæsars: six years later (554) "Chanoranges," a member of the conspiracy (perhaps a title of honour at the Persian court), would be found serving in Italy against Buccelin's marauders. Such was the first Armenian plot against the life and majesty of an emperor; it will not be the last. Generally devoted, like the Swiss, in their impersonal attachment to the empire, and displaying more manly qualities than any desire for intrigue, the Armenians on occasion can become dangerous competitors for the sovereign dignity. In the next century we shall have the brief and obscure "tyranny" of Mejej or Mizizius (668), and with increasing frequency candidates will propose themselves for the purple: until in one century there are few pretenders who are not of this race, and in the next an entire dynasty will be Armenian in origin and sympathies. We may complete here the record of the empire's debt to Armenians on the African shore. Artaban's own successor was probably a fellow-countrymen, John Troglita, the hero of the epic of Cresconius Corippus. Now John's brother is a certain Pappus or Bab, a name common among Armenians, and especially with the clan of Arsacids. He was the son and the husband of a princess; his wife "*filia regis erat; mater quoque filia regis*"; and his own Christian name, John, is a favourite with the Armenians, who have ever held in especial veneration the memory of the Precursor, "Karabied." Such was the tale of Armenian prowess in Africa.

Armenian valour in Africa: first Armenian plot: recall and conspiracy of Artaban (548).

§ 3. Again turning to the East, John Guzes is very valiant at the siege of Petra in 550, and loses his life there the next year in a similar assault. In 551, too, Aratius appears (Hrahad), Arsacid and Camsar, in control of Armenian and Illyrian troops. Armenians command the punitive expedition which exacted vengeance from Rome's seditious subjects in the Caucasus, the Misimians, and the disorderly Tzanni

Persarmenia under religious persecution joins the empire.

Persarmenia under religious persecution joins the empire.

of Pontus; the army obeyed Varazan the Armenian and Pharsantes the Colchian, one who held the office of master of the troops in the Lazic court (μάγιστρος τῶν ἐν αὐλῇ ταγμάτων). This title, like those of *patrician* and *curopalat*, will meet us often, and sometimes in curious disguises, till the close of our history and the subjugation of the free Christian kingdoms between the Black and Caspian Seas.—In 562, another sonorous title was invented for the short and suspicious armistice between the two powers; this time the peace is not "endless" or "for a century," but "for fifty years." Menander gives with his usual minuteness the exact terms of a compact so soon to be violated.—Justin II. (565–578), who showed an equal desire to lighten the subjects' burden and to raise the dignity of Rome, assumed a loftier tone towards the Sassanid than Justinian, mild but persistent, had ever adopted. Once again the northern lands, *ambigua gens mortalium*, as Tacitus well styles them, supplied an incentive to war. While Swania, to the great annoyance of the emperor, decides for union with Persia after a kind of plebiscite, like Rome on Garibaldi's entrance in 1870; Persarmenia, on the other hand, begged to be transferred to the Christian power. This country, once Great Armenia, had been surrendered, if we may trust the solitary evidence of Evagrius, by Philippus (244), after the murder of Gordian III., πρώην Ῥωμαίοις κατήκοος; and if this be true, it forms doubtless an episode in the obscure revolutions which placed Tiridat on the throne. Definitely recognised as Persian by Theodosius, it had taken little part in the recent wars, and since the reign of Justin I. at New Rome (518) had been under the benevolent rule of Mejej (the later Greek Μιζίζιος), a Gnounian prince. He repaired the mischief of the past, paid regular tribute, saw that the Christian faith and practice were respected, and taught Armenians to forget their light vassalage by securing a greater prosperity than in the days of

independence, both in numbers and rich commerce with India. He remained in charge for thirty years (518–548); but Chosroes did not give the succession to a native Christian prince but to a Zoroastrian. The church was persecuted: magians were introduced for a subtle or violent propaganda; fire-temples were built, even in the especially loyal Reschdounian canton. Envoys were sent (532) to remonstrate with the Persian king, and to demand the strict terms of the compact between King Valasch (or Balas) and Prince Vahan the Mamigonian. Chosroes, alarmed at the Gothic successes of Rome, was prepared to conciliate; and Ten-Shahpour (*cf.* later name Ten-Chosroes, Ταμχόσδρω) was recalled. Veshnas-Varanes (552–558) and Varazdat (558–564) succeed; and Souren follows them, a member of the Surenian family, a branch of the Arsacids, to whom Theophylact gives the title κλιματάρχης τῆς Ἀρμενίων πολιτείας (the Armenian *Goghmanagal*). Once more persecution became a settled policy; and Vartan, head of the Mamigonians, set himself forward as the leader of a revolt, his patriotic feelings roused by a private wrong,—the murder of his brother Manuel by Surena. He was distinguished in birth as in military skill, προύχων γένει, ἀξιώσει, ἐμπειρίᾳ στρατηγικῇ—just those characteristics to be expected in a race which forced a chivalrous feudalism upon the reluctant institutions of imperial Rome. The patriarch Moses II. leads a rebellion at Dovin, the record of which is strangely preserved to us by Gregory of Tours. Vartan and Vard (Bardas) complete the attack; Dovin is taken; Surena killed; and by the end of March 571 Persian soldiers and priests of the alien creed were exterminated in a general rising.

Persarmenia under religious persecution joins the empire.

§ 4. Armenia, struggling towards independence, sought alliance of her northerly neighbours (πλησιόχωροι . . . ὁμοεθνεῖς . . . ἀλλόφυλοι, Evagr.) and the powerful protection of Rome. Justin II. wel-

Doubtful issue of the quarrel over Persarmenia (575–580).

Doubtful issue of the quarrel over Persarmenia (575–580).

comes the envoys, promises to defend as his own subjects, and pledges never to abandon the authors of the revolt to the tender mercies of Persia. Iberia follows the lead, and crosses over to the Roman side; for the king of that country we should probably read Ştephen rather than Gourgenes (Γοργινόης), with Theophilus of Byzantium. Chosroes sent Deren, the "Constable of Persia" (*Sparabied*), to reduce the disaffected provinces. Being defeated in the first engagement, he gave way to Bahram (or Varanes) (the pretender eighteen years later to the throne of Persia), who at once availed himself of the dissension invariably prevalent in a feudal society of peers, even when the common liberty is in peril. Vartan, soon despairing of his venture, retired with his kinsmen to the Roman capital, and was there treated with the generous courtesy always extended to dispossessed princes. Nothing can well be more tedious and unedifying than the record of the next seven or eight years. Anarchy prevailed; fire and sword ravaged the country, from which all traces of former prosperity vanished. The Persian army, under Mihram and Bahram, is swelled by Caucasian tribes, Dilemites and Sabirians. Under Marcian the Roman commander fight Vartan the refugee, the Alans with their chieftain Saros, Colchians and Abasgians. Neither great power seemed anxious to push matters to a final settlement; Chosroes is glad in 575 to make peace with the regent, Tiberius II., but wishes to except the rebels from its benefits. The Roman generals, Kurs the "Scythian" (or Goth) and Theodosius, attack the Albanians and Sabirians, take hostages, and secure their brief surrender to the empire: on their default they return, ravage their land, and transplant across the Cyrus the faithful Romanisers, πανοικίᾳ μετοικίζοντες (Menander),—an early instance of that wholesale change of a settlement which is an interesting but disconcerting feature in the later history. The Roman army twice

disbands, either in dislike of a new general or in fear of the emperor's displeasure: it seems a significant symptom of the contempt of authority which marks the fifty years from Justinian to Heraclius. In 576, the Great King marched out in person to Armenia; Taron (an appanage of Vartan's family) he finds a vast wilderness; and, losing the great battle of Melitenè, is said to have forbidden a Persian king to lead his own armies—a prohibition very unlikely, but singularly parallel with the tendencies of China and Rome about this time, where Maurice and Heraclius and Lichi found it difficult to revive the military side of kingship. Next year (577) the humiliated kingdom was exposed to Saracen raiders, acting under the instructions of Rome. Yet the emperors do not follow up their successes, and indeed on both sides of the long struggle we observe merely a temporising and spasmodic policy, no constant aim. There now appeared on the Eastern scene a general whom Armenian writers claim as a fellow-countrymen. Maurice was, according to Evagrius, a native of Arabissus in Cappadocia; but others say he was born in the province of Ararat; in either case it is more than probable that he was in some way connected with that district, which gave strength and military leaders to the empire after the failure of the Balkan or Illyrian stock. He may well have belonged to one of the families who migrated into Roman territory during a persecution. In 579, Tiberius II. agreed to give up the imperial claims in Persarmenia and Iberia, but refused to surrender those who wished to join the empire. But Chosroes especially insists on the extradition of those feudal clan-leaders (γενεάρχαι) who had initiated the revolt; and dies during the ineffective conferences, after a reign of nearly half a century.

Doubtful issue of the quarrel over Persarmenia (575–580).

Tiberius' offer to resign Roman claims to Persarmenia.

§ 5. We are now on the threshold of the most stirring scene in a somewhat wearisome duel; the last fifty years of the wars between Persia and Rome

Tiberius' offer to resign Roman claims to Persarmenia.

are crowded with incident. A Persian general dethrones his sovereign, who is restored by a Roman emperor; a Roman centurion murders his emperor, and is attacked by the Persian, grateful to the prince only, not to the commonwealth. Rome, lately so triumphant in its favourite rôle of arbiter of justice and the world's peace, is helpless before the Persian vengeance; and, after an inglorious and desperate interval of some sixteen years, suddenly awakens to crush her rival in the campaigns of Heraclius, and in the end to expose two exhausted powers to the irresistible Arabs. To the new Shah, Hormisdas (579), Tiberius renews his offer to surrender Persarmenia and Arzanenè, but not the heads of the rebellion. (It is to this epoch that we refer the curious counterpoise of Tiberius to the seditious and untrustworthy legions of Rome; he purchases barbarian slaves (*ἀγοράσας σώματα ἐθνικῶν*), and thus began or revived that policy of slave-armies so eagerly imitated by the Moslem in the cases of Turkman, Janissaries, and Memlukes.) The last year of Tiberius was signalised by a great Roman victory at Constantia; but John Mystakôn, a Thracian, under the new emperor Maurice, 582, suffered a defeat, and yielded his place in 584 to the emperor's brother-in-law, Philippicus; for it might well seem hazardous to entrust an important post to *any* but a member of the imperial family. At the great battle of Solacon, it is said that half the Persian army perished, and this success was followed up by the ravage of Arzanenè. But Philippicus, like Heraclius later, was of a highly strung and neurotic temperament; seized by panic he fled, and, filled with shame, remained in retirement during the rest of his command. The active duties were handed over to Heraclius, father of the future emperor; and the armies of Rome obeyed in addition two Arabs and a Hun (*ὑποστρατηγός*). The mutinous and malcontent spirit of these Roman troops was well displayed in 588, when Priscus was sent out as general-in-chief;

Mutinous state of Persian and Roman armies alike.

they broke into open revolt, forced him to fly for his life, and, refusing to be propitiated by the offer of Philippicus' return, proclaimed Germanus their leader. The Senate condemns Germanus to death; but Maurice, naturally clement, and at this time helpless, pardons him. Finally, on the pleading of Gregory, bishop of Antioch, the troops take back their old commander, Philippicus, and almost at once secure an important victory in a pitched battle near Sisarban, adjoining Nisibis (590). We read with some surprise of this success of soldiers thoroughly mutinous and demoralised; but the armies of Persia were in a worse, at least a similar, plight. Bahram, the new pretender, came of Arsacid stock, and of the family of the Miramians (*τῆς τοῦ Μιρράμου οἰκαρχίας*); that is, he belonged to a branch of the old regnant house which enjoyed the feudal appanage of Rey in Hyrcania down to the middle of the seventh century. During this time Persarmenia had become Roman in its sympathies; Maurice had also appointed a *στρατηγὸς* for Colchis, who, taking measures with the patriarch (*κοινολογήσας τῷ ἐκεῖσε ἱεραρχοῦντι*), had gained a victory over the Persians near Ganzac, the Albanian capital. But a settled policy was out of the question. Opinion began to veer round to Persia: Sembat raises a Persian party, murders John, *Ἀρμενίας ἡγεμών*, is reduced by Domentziolus, condemned to the beasts in the Byzantine arena, and finally reprieved by the clemency of Maurice. It is curious to speculate on the long train of results from this act of pardon. Sembat the Bagratid returns a free man to become a resolute "medizer," the favourite of Chosroes II., the Persian governor of Armenia. From him issued the well-nigh interminable line of Armenian and Georgian kings, who ceased only with the opening of the nineteenth century.

Mutinous state of Persian and Roman armies alike.

§ 6. In 590 Chosroes displaces his father, and is himself dethroned by Bahram. He flies to the secure and honourable protection of Rome. The Armenian

Dethronement of Chosroes.

Chosroes dethroned and restored by Rome in concert with Armenian nobles.

nobles, with that warm and chivalrous interest in a legitimate line which is so prominent in Byzantine history, supported the cause of Chosroes. Among their number are conspicuous Mouschegh, prince of Daron or Taron,[1] a Mamigonian, Sembat the pardoned rebel of the Bagratid stock, and Khoutha, prince of Sassoun, a canton near Daron belonging to the Mamigonians, and giving its name to-day to a notable friend of our English royalty. With Mouschegh emerges a family well known in Roman history—one Alexius Mouschegh (Μωσηλὲ) is a trusted Armenian captain under Constantine VI. (*c.* 790); and another, victor in Sicily, will be Cæsar and emperor's son-in-law for a brief space under Theophilus. Comentiolus has a certain success at Martyropolis, where the garrison are compelled to surrender by the bishop Domitian, another determined Eastern prelate, who mingles in political affairs; Sittas, a rebel, is given up to condign punishment, and burnt alive in the barbarous fashion of those days (we may see such a penalty inflicted under both Phocas and Heraclius). But Chosroes did not like Comentiolus. By the king's influence he was recalled, or rather put in a subordinate place under a general of undoubted Armenian descent, Narses, an Arsacid and a Camsar (541), who six years earlier was governor of Constantia. After a brilliant victory over the pretender Bahram in Aderbaijan, near the modern Tabriz, Chosroes is re-established as king. He cedes Dara, Anastasius' well-placed citadel, and a large strip of Armenia, stretching along Lesser Armenia; it has been long since the Romans had a frontier on the East so safe or so honourable. Armenians are in favour for their loyal support; the sons of Sembat, Ashot and Varazdirot, receive the rank due to the children of the Great King; their father, a vassal of Persia[a] on specially advantageous

[1] Tchamtchian believes that this captain may be identified with John Mystakôn, an early general under Maurice, but there seems little reason.

terms, is made *Marzban* of Armenia and Hyrcania, lying south-west of the Caspian. Mouschegh, or "Musel," the Mamigonian, alone is envious and disappointed; like some feudal noble of Western Europe, he retires sullenly to his own estates. Ten years of peace and silent recovery (591–601) were a welcome relief to the peoples of the near East, hurried along against their will in the aimless quarrels of the two great powers. Only the Saracen free-lances seem to have distressed Chosroes by their raids; and on his remonstrance (601), Maurice sent George, "prefect of the East," and comptroller of the revenue (φορολογίας ἐπιστασία, Thph. Simoc.), to propitiate his offended ally. It was very typical of the disintegrating and individualist spirit then abroad, that the envoy boasted, openly and with impunity, that to his tact alone was due the success of a delicate business which the emperor could not have carried through. Meantime, as we know, "*urgentibus imperii fatis*," disaffection had penetrated the Western armies of Rome; the Avar campaigns were a failure; the toiling emperor could do nothing right in the eyes of his subjects. For a moment the destiny of the commonwealth hangs in the balance; but the evil genius prevails, and Phocas is elected by the troops. He was joyfully accepted by the capital and its factions (602), to their eternal shame and remorse.

Chosroes dethroned and restored by Rome in concert with Armenian nobles.

Welcome peace broken by the murder of Maurice.

§ 7. At this the unnatural and incredible peace was roughly broken. In 604 policy and the *manes* of his murdered friend drove Chosroes into a declaration of war, and the last and most dismal scene opens in the long fight. For eighteen years the Romans suffer indescribable hurt and ignominy (604–622); in six years their majesty is amply vindicated, and the exhausted combatants succumb to an unexpected foe. At this dramatic crisis in our history, we can readily forgive the turgid metaphors of the historian; the Persian king sounds the trumpet which announces the doom of a world, and over-

Chosroes' war of vengeance against Rome.

Chosroes' war of vengeance against Rome.

throws the well-being of Roman and Persian alike (κοσμόφθορον σάλπιγγα . . . λυτήριον εὐπραγίας). The now pacified frontier had been denuded of troops, and all available forces had been sent over for the pressing needs of the Avar campaign. These were now hastily collected and despatched eastwards, under a eunuch, Leontius, soon to be supplanted by the new emperor's own brother (or nephew), Domentziolus, the *Curopalat;* for Phocas, like Maurice, seems to trust only a near relative in high command. A conspiracy of perhaps honourable silence among the historians disguises the details of this war; Theophylact is scanty, and the Oriental writers alone give us some tidings of a crisis, which forms such a signal refutation of *elective* monarchy. The Armenian princes, living in a spirited feudal society, careless like the later Teutons of any tie but personal loyalty, were not backward in offering themselves for the war of righteous vengeance. When Sembat dies in 601, Chosroes appoints a nominee recommended by the nobles—David, the Saharhounian. Ashot, his son, accompanied the king on an expedition into Roman Armenia; and being made lieutenant of Persian forces in that district, begins to ravage a country just reviving under the blessings of peace. Mouschegh (Μωσηλὲ), alone in his private appanage of Taron, remained, like Achilles in his tent, deaf to the call to arms; and in the truceless enmity of the two forces believed he had found the best guarantee for his own autonomy. Mihram sent against him a nephew of the Great King himself; is absurdly deceived by Vahan the Wolf, heir to the principality, and meets with woeful discomfiture; his army is divided and lured to its destruction piecemeal, and the independence of Taron seems secured. Vahan, succeeding to the chieftaincy in 605, still defies the might of Persia, and set an example which the unwieldy and dissolving empire of Rome could not imitate. Chosroes, indignant at the failure of his

Mutinous independence of Taron.

expedition and his nephew's death, sends his uncle, Vakhtang, against the rebel. But David the Marzban eludes the order to send reinforcements, and Vahan is completely successful. He dies in glory and independence at his capital Moush ; and his son Sembat, having killed the second kinsman of the Great King, is for the present left alone in his precarious freedom. Such was the feudal atmosphere of Armenia; such were the centrifugal tendencies which rendered sovereign authority everywhere helpless at the beginning of the seventh century.

Mutinous independence of Taron.

III

THE DYNASTY OF HERACLIUS AND THE EASTERN VASSALS

(*a*) To the Death of Constans III. (620–668)

§ 1. During his distant campaign in Persia, Heraclius had no reason to complain of the services rendered by Armenia in other parts of the empire. His unexpected vigour and success had reunited those scattered limbs and interests which had been falling apart in the years that followed Justinian's death. When the soldiers, despising a sexless rebel, saved him the trouble of punishing Eleutherius' revolt, the exarchate was given to Isaac, an Armenian (probably of the Camsar clan), 625 (?), whose epitaph, written by his wife Susannah, can still be read in St. Vitalis at Ravenna. He belonged to that princely caste who offered themselves to the emperors almost on equal terms—to that feudal and warlike nobility which still surrounded the Sassanid throne and tempered its despotism, only to vanish utterly in the democratic equality of Islam and the unchecked autocracy, its necessary consequence.

Heraclius' attempt to secure religious conformity in Armenia.

> Ἀρμένιος ἦν γὰρ οὗτος ἐκ λαμπροῦ γένους
> ὁ τῆς ἁπάσης Ἀρμενίας κοσμὸς μέγας
> Ἰσαάκιος τῶν βασιλεῶν ὁ σύμμαχος.

Heraclius' attempt to secure religious conformity in Armenia.

(These lines show clearly the proud and independent spirit in which he served Rome, governing the curious patchwork which composed the imperial districts in Italy for eighteen years.) The problem of Heraclius in dealing with Armenians in their own country was one of religion, as will be seen in the sequel. David, lieutenant-general in Persarmenia since 601, and Prince of the Saharhounians, escaped to the Romans in 625, finding it difficult to conceal his sympathies in the crusade, or convince the king of his good faith. Varazdirot the Bagratid, son of Sembat, is his successor as *Marzban;* but exposed to the plots of an envious governor of Aderbaijan, Roustem, he follows the precedent set and takes refuge in the emperor's capital, after nearly seven years' command in Armenia (631). On the peace (628) Heraclius gave Roman Armenia to Mejej the Gnounian (Μεζέζιος), a great-grandson of that Mejej who had long controlled Persarmenia under Cabades and Chosroes Nushirvan. Heraclius now tried to secure religious unity and persuade Armenia to accept the council of Chalcedon. The patriarch Esdras and Mejej consent, but are indignantly repudiated by the rest of the prelates; and the rupture of the churches has lasted to the present day. Meantime the independence of Sembat the Mamigonian, Prince of Taron, was secured by the weakness of Persia and his own craft. Surena, demanding the surrender of his brother Vakhtang's wife and children, is defeated; and Vahan or Baanes deceives and cuts to pieces some Persian troops under Dehram in a fashion strangely recalling the earlier successes of this house. Taron was now safe from interference, and this immunity from foreign control was shared with the adjacent districts of the Balounians, of Haschtiang, and of Ard-Shont.

§ 2. The flight of Varazdirot to Byzantium drove Armenia into alliance with the emperor. Rustem,

who had attempted to oust the late governor, was hindered by troubles at home and could not profit by his disappearance. Anarchy prevailed everywhere. The Patriarch Esdras, taking the lead like Moses, Domitian, Cyrus, Sergius (statesmen-prelates of the age), summoned a conference of peers, and with their consent despatched envoys to Heraclius (*c.* 632). The emperor, hoping for better fortune in political than in his recent religious intervention, sent out David, the ex-governor, with the high title *Curopalat:* this is the earliest instance of its use for an Armenian governor, and it will meet us at every turn in Armenian history together with the name μάγιστρος. But the attempt to rule independent nobles by a vassal prince of their own rank could not succeed; feudal pride was too strong. The nobles league and chase David from his post (*c.* 634), and civil war ensues till 636. Then Theodore, Prince of the Reschdounians (like Taron, near Lake Van), acquires sufficient force to exercise the precarious office of *Marzban* without authorisation from either monarch; quite in the fashion of some mediæval count, doubtful vassal of a German emperor and a French king. Meantime the Arab onslaught on the prostrate rivals had begun, and in the Roman service and in their own country Armenians are conspicuous. It is said that Vardan commanded a Roman army at the siege of Damascus (634), where the Greek writers give Theodore, the emperor's brother; while Vardan's son is on duty at Emesa. If it is true (and the two accounts are quite compatible), he will be a Mamigonian prince. In the same year of disaster (634) Heraclius sent a Vahan (or Baanes), also a Mamigonian, in joint command with Trithurius. (Of this Vahan Arab writers know nothing, but use consistently the name Vardan both for this colleague and for "Theodorus"). It is not difficult to see why he supplants the emperor's brother in the eyes of the

Ambiguous position of Armenia between the two powers.

Advent of the Arabs.

Patriotic resistance under the Vahans.

Arabians; for he actually displaced him in a mutiny of the troops and was saluted emperor, curiously foreshadowing a very similar sedition of the Persians under Theophobus exactly 200 years later (προχειρίζονται βασιλέα τὸν Β. καὶ Ἡράκλειον ἀπεκήρυξαν, Thpl.). But the revolt of "Emperor" Bardanes comes to the same untimely end as that of his Armenian kinsman under Nicephorus I. (804): he retires to Mount Sinai and becomes a monk.[1] Another Armenian Vahan is killed at Tarmouk (636), where some read in error "Manuel": this officer, a Mamigonian Romaniser and a eunuch (according to Elmacin), was sent by Heraclius as governor of Alexandria and Αὐγουστάλιος. But Armenian valour was sadly needed at home. Arab raids became frequent; Abderrahman with 18,000 ravages Taron, raises tribute, and carries off women and children as slaves or hostages. Prince Vahan (a Camsar and Arsacid on the mother's side), son of Sembat of Taron, raises half this number to defend their country; he aroused a Mouschegh into arms, and unhappily Sahour, Prince of the Andsevatsians, from the southernmost part of Vasparacan and the heart of Kurdistan mountains. This traitor ruined the patriotic enterprise and passed over to the foe, the loyal Armenians suffering a terrible rout and losing Mouschegh (Μουσηλὲ) and Diran, Vahan's brother, who enjoyed the rich satisfaction of slaying the renegade before his own death.

Nationalism ruined by feudal paralysis: Sack of Dovin (640).

§ 3. Theodore, Prince of the Reschdounians, tried without success to rally the nationalist cause; feudal jealousies prevented any cohesion in the party.

[1] If we may trust an anonymous Syriac chronicler at the beginning of the fourteenth century, this was not the only instance of Separatism in the East, where private ambition defended in name the cause of the empire which had already been surrendered by the emperor: a certain Joseph makes himself master of Byblos, maintaining a petty State against Persian and Arab alike under the unauthenticated title of defender of the empire on the Phœnician coast; Job succeeds and extends his dominion to Cæsarea Philippi.

Nationalism ruined by feudal paralysis: Sack of Dovin (640).

The country lay open to the marauders, for the Arabs had as yet no idea whatever of empire. So pitiable was the condition of the land that Patriarch Esdras dies of grief (639) after a primacy of ten years and eight months; and at this signal the Arabs close in round his see-city, the capital Dovin, taking it by assault early in 640 (Epiphany, according to Asolik). It was burnt and laid waste, and 35,000 captives may attest past prosperity and present misfortune. Habib, ironically termed the "friend of Rome" (he was no doubt a constant but unwelcome visitor), was the author of this crushing blow to Armenian freedom. Believing resistance to be fruitless, the "Batrik" (πατρίκιος) of "Bas-fouradjan" acknowledges the caliph; or rather surrenders through Habib to Moawiah, governor of Syria for Othman. In this anonymous official with a Roman title some have recognised Theodore, who had so lately tried to marshal his national army. Habib passed northward through Sisakon beyond the Araxes, seized Waïs, a strong fortress, and advancing into Iberia, seized Tiflis. All the princes of North Armenia and Iberia, and the chieftains of the Caucasus, pay tribute. Salman, his lieutenant, captured Bardaah, the capital of Otenè (in Albanian hands since the fall of the Arsacid monarchy in Armenia), and Schamkor, a citadel and district in the north (which comprised a separate lordship until the fourteenth century). The Arabs' success was continued into the fastnesses of Albania; Cabalaca (or Cabala), the capital, felt into their hands; and the petty Albanian chiefs in Schaki and up to the Caspian Sea were reduced to vassals. (But a terrible Nemesis awaited them (651), which we may here anticipate. The Khan of the Khazars proved an unconscious avenger of Rome and of Armenia; the Arab commander and his troops were confronted and exterminated, few escaping with the story.) Such was then the state of the country in the middle of the

Steady northward advance of the Arabs (640 sqq.).

Steady northward advance of the Arabs (640 sqq.).

seventh century when Constans, grandson of Heraclius, was just issuing from tutelage into a wayward and headstrong manhood. Both powers claimed the suzerainty of Armenia (for in neither case did it amount by a direct administration); the Arabs, though continually ravaging, never made any permanent conquest; and the strange slave-dynasties of Turkmans, alien military oligarchies, Taherids, Sofarids, Bowids, Samanids, had no better success. It was reserved for the pacific avarice of the Byzantines and for the ruthless courage of the Seljukian Turks to overpower this sturdy outpost of eastern Christianity—or rather to drive its last representatives, like the Gothic remnant in Saracen Spain, into the fortresses of Cilicia and Georgia.

After the visits of Constans III. Nationalists aim at autonomy.

§ 4. But meantime affairs in Armenia had not stood still. Once more Theodore tries to confederate the nationalists. The Roman Senate had, in the name of the youthful Constans (642), sent the old *Curopalat*, Varazdirot, to resume whatever power he could over the turbulent local chiefs, who were quite out of sympathy with the uniform and centralised control of Rome. On his death Sembat, his son, succeeded to a vain dignity. Sembat (in a well-marked triple division of authority and department) was at the head of the civil administration; Theodore commanded the troops; and the new Patriarch Narses, or Nerses, showed all the vigour and capacity of an ecclesiastical statesman. These three, acting in a rare and happy agreement, endeavoured to restore order to the Church and State. But on a fresh inroad (646) through Peznounia (north-west of Lake Van) to the remote province of Ararat or Uriartu, Theodore and Sembat are forced to pay tribute once more. This news of his defaulting vassals reached the inflammable emperor, who seemed more anxious to punish this defection than prevent it by timely reinforcement. Constans III. arrived at Dovin, now recovering from its desolation, and was wel-

comed by the conciliating patriarch, Narses (*c.* 646). Valuable time and patience were exhausted in profitless theology. Constans, like his grandfather nearly twenty years before, attempts to force the Council of Chalcedon on the belief of Armenia. To secure a barren religious uniformity, he gave up a valuable occasion for establishing Roman suzerainty over a grateful people. On his retirement (647) the old feuds break out again, and the Symbol is repudiated. He now from a distance orders the three heads of the civil, military, and ecclesiastical society to convoke a council at Dovin and to urge the acceptance of the distasteful creed. Narses, finding himself in an untenable position between prince and people, and unable to satisfy either party, abdicates. In 649 Theodore secures John the Doctor for his successor, and the two convene an assembly at Mandzikert, in Central Armenia (651). But the fortunes of Armenia have taken an unexpected turn for the better. News of the defeat and overthrow of Habib's lieutenant may very likely have reached the conclave; the emperor was far off, and Roman troops were scanty. The princes believed themselves able to dispense with the support of Rome, its churches, its orthodoxy, and its imposts. They anathematise the creed of Chalcedon and all its adherents. Political and religious separatism had triumphed; and it may be that the lords were always more favourable to the loose suzerainty of the Arabian caliph.

After the visits of Constans III. Nationalists aim at autonomy.

§ 5. In this crisis Constans III. sent the gallant veteran, Mejej the Gnounian, commanding in Western Armenia, to conciliate his countrymen; but speedily replaced him by a certain Pasagnathes, "Patrician of the Armenians" (Thpl.), who is by no means so loyal to the Roman interest. Imitating the feudal princes around him and the example of Joseph and Job in Cœle-Syria, of Eleutherius in Italy, he attempts to seize autonomy, and gives hostages to Moawiah.

Waning of Roman influence; Armenia tributary to caliph.

Waning of Roman influence; Armenia tributary to caliph.

Constans was roused to indignation; unstable and precipitate, he advances to Cappadocian Cæsarea to punish his viceroy or his vassal, is seized with despair of reducing Armenia (ἀπελπίσας τῆς Ἀρμενίας), and beats a hasty retreat to the city of Constantine. Moawiah now determines to reduce Armenia, where he counts on the support of Pasagnathes. Abulpharagius speaks of a great expedition, of a double siege of the Cæsarea before mentioned, of an honourable tribute and capitulation; and of the amazement and regret of the Arabs at the rich splendour of the city they had held to ransom. But the onslaught of Moawiah had produced a reaction in Greater Armenia; Pasagnathes had made little progress in detaching the nation from the Roman alliance. In 653 another effort was made, this time with better success. Habib, "friend of Rome," was sent thither and defeated a Roman general, Maurianus, who was present with reinforcements for the loyalists. He chased him to Caucasus; ravaged the country, burned the towns, and came home laden with booty and captives. The Armenian writers, John Catholicos and Asolik, believed that over 7000 hostages were carried off from the richer families as a pledge of their inaction. Theodore the Reschdounian, lieutenant-general and patriot, at last abandons the Roman cause. With his troops he passes over to Damascus, dying there the next year (654); his body is brought back and buried in his father's sepulchre in Vasparacan. The civil governor Sembat, *Curopalat*, dies about the same time; and of the two only Narses is left. He comes out of his seclusion, and concerts measures with the grandees of Armenia, to secure order and protect the country from a foe whose method of conquest was a mere raid. Hamazasp, son of David the Mamigonian, is now raised to the supreme civil dignity; and Vard or Bardas, son of the late commander-in-chief, as the new general, divides with him the government.

Armenian authorities style these leaders "*Patrician*"; and with this Roman title they continued tributary to the Moslem.

Waning of Roman influence; Armenia tributary to caliph.

IV

UNDER THE HERACLIADS AND ISAURIANS

(β) From Constantine IV. to the Death of Leo III. (670-740)

§ 1. It seems abundantly clear that the Armenian soldiers in the immediate service of the empire were dissatisfied with the treatment of their country by the Heracliads. After the great opportunity in 628, the Roman policy had been vexatious and intermittent. It had neither protected Armenia as a friendly ally, nor governed her as a subject vassal—neither defended nor administered. The imperial visits had been unwelcome; for they had turned on points of religious difference, not on the urgent need of reinforcements against the unbeliever. While the Council of Chalcedon was pressed on the people with angry zeal, the country was left exposed to a ruthless power which recognised neither Chalcedon nor any other. In 667 Constantine IV., as yet beardless, was regent for his father absent in Sicily. The στρατηγὸς Ἀρμενιακῶν, Sapor the Persian-born (Σαβώριος Περσογένης), revolts, an Amadounian prince; allied with Moawiah's troops he agrees with the caliph to pay tribute to him if he wins the empire. Sergius, "*magister militum*" (στρατηλάτης), was sent to Damascus to draw up the contract. But Rome was saved from the disgrace of becoming vassal to the caliph, under an Armenian, by a eunuch of the court. Andreas had been bold enough to refuse leave to the empress to accompany Constans westwards; just as the Patriarch Sergius had prevented a similar flight of the Emperor Heraclius himself. Before the caliph, at Damascus, the two

Revolt of Armenian princes in East and West; Sapor and Mejej (668).

Revolt of Armenian princes in East and West; Sapor and Mejej (668).

emissaries explain their terms—his favour is to be given to the highest bidder. Sergius, full of the true Byzantine hatred for a palace-chamberlain, insults Andreas; and the latter hurries off to arrange for a warm reception of the general from the Clisurrarch of the Taurus (in the neighbourhood of Arabissus). Sergius, elated at his triumph, returns from his mission to be rudely seized in the moment of success. Andreas mutilates and hangs the rebel, not for the personal abuse but for his treason to the empire. Sapor dies of a fractured skull in an accident with a restive horse, while Nicephorus, patrician, is sent against him to Adrinople (which we must suppose to be some unknown spot within the limits of the Armeniac *theme*). The sedition of the Περσογένης had collapsed; but within a year an obscure cabal at Syracuse had procured the assassination of Constans at the bath, and the elevation of the handsome Armenian, Mejej, to taste for a brief season the cares rather than the delights of sovereignty. He is Μιζίζιος in Theophanes, Mizius to the barbarous translator in the *Miscella*, Mecetius to Paul the Deacon, Mezzetius to Anastasius. Michael, the Syrian patriarch, styles him a patrician; he was certainly a Gnounian prince; in no other family do we find this name. We may well ask whether he was not the son or grandson (εὐπρεπὴς κ. ὡραιότατος) of the aged Mejej, partner of Heraclius and governor of Roman Armenia? The entanglement of Justinian (patrician) and his son Germanus might persuade us to accept another hypothesis;—was this another attempt to transfer the throne to the survivors of a dispossessed dynasty, who had treated Armenia with greater fairness than the Heracliads? We may note that Germanus is castrated, and becomes later—like Ignatius, son of Michael I. (813)—patriarch of the capital city.

Recovery of Armenia under suzerainty to caliph.

§ 2. During the contest of Ali and Moawiah for the caliphate, Armenia recovered her lost independence and placed herself under the protection of

Rome. We find again the title "*Curopalat*"; but when Moawiah became recognised head of Islam, the Armenian again veered round against Rome, remembering the scanty aid rendered by the empire and the constant religious friction. Vard or Bardas, the Reschdounian, was prominent in the anti-Roman party. Hamazasp died after a principate of four years in 658; and the caliph "invests" his brother and successor, Gregory, on the demand of the grandees and the patriarch. It cannot be denied that under the infidel suzerain the country enjoyed a new life of peace and prosperity. The lords were harmonious; the prince tactful, pious, and enlightened; the tribute punctual; and the contingents of Armenia regularly figured in the muster-roll against the Roman Empire. In 683 (John Catholicos and Asolik are our authorities) this tranquil development was suddenly arrested. The Khazars, unconscious saviours of the Armenian State thirty years before, crossed the Caucasus on a pillaging enterprise, slay Gregory, and expose the land to two years' anarchy. In the last year of Constantine IV., a prince more fortunate in West than East, Ashot the Bagratid, rallying the forces against the northern raider, is recognised as "patrician." He gives (according to a sacred custom) the control of the troops to a brother, Sembat, and secures his position by dutiful tribute, the only indispensable incident in the condition of a Moslem vassal. The young Justinian II. and the caliph strike a peace for ten years in 686, which gives signal proof of progress and quiet recovery in the empire during the reign of the fourth Constantine. The caliph gave 3000 pieces of gold a day, one horse, and one slave, while the two powers shared equally (*κατὰ τὸ ἴσον*) the revenues of Cyprus, Armenia, and Iberia. But behind this apparent humiliation of the tributary caliphate lay a secret understanding of the utmost importance, which explains the sudden advantage of Rome in

Recovery of Armenia under suzerainty to caliph.

Secret compact of Just. II. and the caliph: removal of the Mardaites.

Secret compact of Just. II. and the caliph: removal of the Mardaites.

the negotiations. For some time past the Mardaites in the Cœle-Syria had been a thorn in the side of the Damascene court. Under a nominal allegiance to Rome, they had kept their autonomy and played off one power against its rival. Justinian II. now agreed to the removal of this inexpensive bulwark. A local chronicle of later date tells of the behaviour of Leontius, general of the East, and afterwards emperor (695–698), towards these gallant mountaineers: advancing to Cabbelias, their stronghold, with protestations of amity, he lured and killed John their chief. He appointed as successor the nephew of the dead prince, administered the oath of allegiance to the empire, and somehow contrived to appease their resentment. He then achieved the sole object of this sudden imperial interest in the Mardaites: he removes 12,000 of their best soldiers to Lesser Armenia, to Thrace, and to Pamphylia (where, like the Gotho-Greeks in an earlier age, they formed a military settlement or colony detached from the native populace, under their own commander at Attalia, the κατεπάνω (*Constant. Imp. ad. imp.*, § 50; this would seem to be the work of Tiberius III., who sprang from those parts, and it is not beyond possibility that Leo the "Isaurian" was the son of one of these Apêlatic brigands). Without distracting attention to the origin and fortunes of this remarkable community, we may note that Roman opinion looked on these unauthorised defenders as a "brazen wall" (χάλκεον τεῖχος); and regarded Justinian's act as the capital error of his reign, whereby he permanently exposed the eastern frontier and mutilated the empire (τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν δυναστείαν ἀκρωτηριάσας). The Arabs, now relieved from fear, sought again and fortified anew the strongholds from Mopsuestia to the north of Edessa and Nisibis, and the parts round Martyropolis (Miafarekin).—The same Leontius was sent on as general κατὰ τὴν Ἀρμενίαν, with a force of 40,000 to overawe the

inhabitants and remind them of the mighty claims of Rome. He advanced right up to Albania to Mongam, the rich alluvial pastures and marshes at the mouth of the Cyrus, ravages twenty-five provinces or cantons, carries captive eight hundred families to be sold as slaves, and massacres the Saracens there.

Secret compact of Just. II. and the caliph: removal of the Mardaites.

§ 3. Armenia had then, by the end of Justinian's first reign, passed through the following vicissitudes since the rise of Islam, the collapse of the Sassanids, and the decay of Roman influence or continuous policy in the East. Arab invasions begin as early as 637; they capture and lose Dovin, 639; reduce a large part as Saracen province by 650, but soon, after the defeat by the Khazars, are driven out, 652–656; recover their footing by 657, and during the reign of the Roman emperor, Constantine IV., control the land by tributary princes; are challenged by Justinian in a restless but impatient policy, 686-693; and in 693 send governors to take the place of the native rulers. For in 692 Justinian had lost the great battle of Cilician Sebastè by the defection of his Slavonic mercenaries (λάος περιούσιος, to the number of 30,000, an unhappy imitation of Tiberius II.'s bodyguard). The caliph shakes off the tribute, and reasserts his sway over Armenia (693), since the inroad of Leontius a prey to anarchy and invasion. The Arabs had raided and carried off booty and slain Ashot the patrician, after four years' rule. In 690, Justinian had himself visited the East, with an army, divided into sections, for Armenia and for Albania. His presence compels the submission of the lords, tribute is paid and promised, and Roman control seems to revive. The government is entrusted to Narses of Camsar descent, son of Vahan: and he is honoured by the dignities of Patrician and *Curopalat.* The troops and military matters, with the title πατρίκιος τῆς Ἀρμενίας, are given (according to the familiar division of labour) to Sembat the Bagratid,

Troubled state of Armenia after the visit of Just. II.

Arab inroads and removal of the capital.

brother of the murdered Ashot. On the retirement of Justinian, who could intimidate but not defend, Abdallah, on behalf of the caliphs, marched to Dovin and secures the persons of the rulers by a trick, including the patriarch Isaac,—the chief pastor exercising (as we have often seen) in this feudal society very great political influence. Sembat manages to escape, and after opening a secret and hesitating intrigue with Leontius, general of the *Anatolics*, flies to Albania with Ashot his cousin, and Vard the son of Theodore, Prince of the Reschdounians. The Armenian cause is upheld only by a Roman resident or commissioner (*παράβουλος ὀνόματι Σαβῖνος*), who, indignant at the flight of Sembat, harasses and defeats the Arabs. His troops take Dovin, burn the renegade governor's palace, and march to Vartanakert, where the refugees were besieged; the siege is raised, the Arabs defeated and drowned in the breaking of the deceptive ice, which a frost of exceptional severity had formed on the Araxes. Leontius, well known in the East, has now become emperor (695), and he sends a namesake as *Curopalat.* Sembat moves the capital northwards to the fortress of Toukhars in Daïk (or Taïk), on the Lazic frontier, and for some time kept the country inviolate from Arab incursions. To this period (? 692 or earlier) must be referred an obscure alliance between the Khazars and the empire, resulting in a joint inroad from the north into the caliph's lands. Othman defeats the united force of 60,000 with 4000, if the figures are correct; and the caliph's nephew, Mohammed, at the head of 100,000, after a preliminary failure, defeats the Khazars; while his son Maslemah attacks and completely routs 80,000 at the gates of Tzour (or defiles of Derbend), and achieves a complete victory. It is hazardous to assign this event to any precise year in the caliphate of Abdalmelik, but the inroad would seem to show (1) the exposed and troublous state of Armenia

proper; (2) the security or insolence with which the Arabs penetrated across it to attack the northern foe. *Arab inroads and removal of the capital.*

§ 4. Meantime in Byzantium, Leontius gives place to Tiberius III. (698); and once more an Armenian pretender gives anxiety at court. Bardanes, son of Nicephorus, a patrician, is troubled with an early legend of an eagle shielding him from the sun in infancy. The same tale is narrated of Marcian and of Basil; but the court was justifiably suspicious of Armenian immigrants of royal descent and imperial auguries, and he is exiled (*c.* 700) to Cephallenia, to reappear as first undoubted Armenian Cæsar in 711. Armenia, as was her wont, vacillated between the two powers; Vahan, "*he of the seven devils*," a Mamigonian governor, was a faithful henchman to the caliphs, and reduced forts in Lesser Armenia for the use of Arabs. But on his retirement, the lords in secret conclave (*οἱ ἄρχοντες Ἀρμενίας*) decide to extirpate the Saracen intruder. Narses the Camsarid and Sembat the Bagratid lead the new revolt, always believing their late more tolerable than their present masters. Roman influence revives during this not discreditable reign of an obscure Cibyrrhæot (698–705); the northerly people of Vanand, by the Araxes, join the confederacy; and it is proposed to welcome a Roman garrison for Greater Armenia,—an expedient which would have been long ago suggested but for the incurable feudalism which could neither brook tutelage nor dispense with foreign aid. At the same time, dread of the nearer power forces the insurgents to open negotiations with the caliph in case of failure; and it is probable that the captive patriarch Isaac, dying (703) at Harran in Mesopotamia, was engaged on a conciliatory mission. But the day of vengeance was near: Mohammed entering Armenia with a large force massacres all Romans; convenes through Cassim, his lieutenant, all the grandees (*μεγιστᾶνες*), and burns *Terrible vengeance of caliph (705) against Romanising party.*

Terrible vengeance of caliph (705) against Romanising party.

them alive! Dovin is given to the flames; noble families are enslaved; pillage and desolation last for several years; and the poor remainder of the Christian nobility take measures for deserting their country and finding asylum on Roman ground. In 706, the *curopalat* Sembat, with two Arzrounian princes, Gregory and Gorioun, fly to Lazica, where Justinian II. allotted towns for their occupancy: but finding it difficult to live under official supervision, these feudal princes return to the despairing business of brigand- or guerilla-warfare. The silence which falls on Armenian history in the opening of the eighth century tells us emphatically of the decay if not of the extinction of national life. A feudal peerage, rent by jealous factions and supporting severally, like the Japanese Daimios, a warlike retinue of vassals and kinsmen, could not accept the control of either despotic or democratic monarchy. While they felt themselves free to join either party at pleasure, the sovereigns of New Rome and of Damascus regarded them at each default in the light of traitors and apostates. The sole administrative measure of these suzerains was a punitive expedition, brutal ferocity, a hasty nomination, and a hurried retreat. No attempt was made to annex or incorporate; and though both powers are to be blamed for a policy of slave-drivers, it may be confessed that the most prosperous years in the troubled century were passed under Arab allegiance. Yet the results of this most recent and vindictive act (705-6) desolated Armenia and sent her soldiers and captains wholesale into the ranks of Rome. Even more conspicuously than before, Armenian influence prevails in the imperial society and government. Alone the Greek Church maintains its independence and its suspicious attitude.

Armenian exiles flock into Roman service.

Early adventures of Conon in the East.

§ 5. The early experiences and success of Conon (or Leo III.) sufficiently attest his Armenian connections. He was sent by the restored Justinian II.

to subdue a revolt of Abasgia, Alania, and Iberia, which the greed of governors had roused during the impunity granted by the weakness of the central government (695–705). He was also (it was said by the malignant) despatched by a jealous prince upon an errand from which he would never return alive. But Conon falsified this secret hope. Known to us as an able leader and an implacable persecutor, he displayed all the arts of a tactful diplomat. Deprived of his military chest (it was said with Justinian's connivance), he secured the cordial help of the Alans against the mutineers. The Alans deceive them by a profession of sympathy, surround their forces, and at his orders exterminate them. Another Roman detachment was defeated by the Saracens (?) before Archæopolis in Lazica. Conon is now cut off by his relentless foes; and only manages to slip through by a perjured guile, by which Pharasmanes, governor of the Iron Fortress in the Caucasus, consents to capitulate and join the Romans, but is seized and his citadel razed to the ground. Leo gained Absilia, was received with honour, and sailed from Trebizond for the capital, to find that Anastasius II. was fixed on the throne (713). We make much of these early stories of great men, but this series of incidents throws perhaps little light upon the state of feeling in the East. It is clear that exchange of suzerains was easy, that Abasgia and Lazica were in the main loyal to the Romans, but that the Saracens (?) found no difficulty in penetrating to the very capital of Colchis. Yet it is from this half-mythic exploit that Leo III. won the command of the *Anatolics*, and the reputation which made the caliphate recognise in him the future emperor.—About this time the authorities supply us with conflicting rumours on the behaviour and policy of Rome towards the Armenians, which make it difficult to discover the truth: at the close of his reign Justinian (in Syrian accounts) is said to drive out these natives from his dominion,

Early adventures of Conon in the East.

Two Armenian emperors: problems (1) of Armenian settlements and (2) origin of Leo III.

while the Arabs gave them a home (*c.* 709). This (unless two accounts are given of a single event) was repeated under the Armenian Bardanes, now the Emperor Philippicus, in 712: "He chased them from his territory, and the Arabs gave them settlements in Melitenè." So Abulpharagius and Michael Syrus, and even Theophanes, seem to agree, οἰκῆσαι ἠνάγκασεν, which might easily be applied to one who made them shift their quarters. The natural and accepted account is of course exactly the reverse: Philippicus established his fellow-countrymen, expelled from their domiciles, in Melitenè, and in Fourth Armenia. History is, alas! not so explicit as to the respective power of Rome or the caliphate to allot land in these districts; and we are obliged to leave an obscure transaction with this remark:—the settlers seemed in the end to become rather the friends of the caliph than partisans of the empire. So confused are the homesteads and the population by the shifting of entire countrysides in this era, that it is not surprising if we cannot assign the birth and descent of Leo with any accuracy. Did he belong to the Mardaite borderers? Was he born, like Artavasdus, his son-in-law, at Marach, near Germanicea, on the confines of Syria and Cilicia? Technically, the name "Isaurian" means little; Leo III. was not a compatriot of Zeno. But the name *Syrian* means still less. It is incontestable that he represented Armenia in character and creed, that his chief allies and relatives came from that nation, and that he believed himself closely united with it.

Unqualified submission to the caliph (from 710).

§ 6. Still we find Arab intervention in the north stern and imperious. In 710, Othman seized Camakh, or Ani, the ancient capital of Armenia, with its images of the old Armenian gods and its sepulchres of the kings of the Haik dynasty. About 720, the country was once again aroused by the din of war, and became the scene of a renewed struggle of Khazars with the Moslem. Maslemah, the son of Caliph

Abdalmelik, who failed in the great siege of Constantinople, now *governor of Armenia,* has to repress the invaders: Armenia has no longer native and tributary rulers, but a prince direct from Damascus. In 722, he carries the war across the Caucasus into the homes of the enemy. For the next ten years Maslemah appears and disappears in an Armenian command, according to the caprice of his brother, Caliph Hischam. We find him in 728 laying siege to Derbend, but suddenly retiring (δειλανδρήσας) by one of those inexplicable panics, which seem common enough for Roman and infidel generals in the East about this time. He is again displaced in 731, to make room for Merwan, an Ommiad, and son of Mohammed, who long governed a contrite or suppressed Armenia. Under him "order reigned in" Armenian "Warsaw"; the country was consolidated; the Khazars repressed or conciliated; the petty princes along the Eastern Caucasus reduced to order. It was the era of unquestioned Arabian supremacy.

Unqualified submission to the caliph (from 710).

DIVISION B

PREDOMINATING INFLUENCE WITHIN (740–1040)

V

ARMENIANS WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE EMPIRE FROM CONSTANTINE V. TO THEOPHILUS (*c.* 740-840)

Revolt of Artavasdus and transplantation of Constantine V.

§ 1. IT becomes difficult in the period before us to keep distinct the streams of political development and of Armenian infiltration. Deprived of local life, Armenia poured the best treasures of her warlike or feudal temper into the empire, and contributed largely to its internal history. The revolt of Artavasdus must be once more treated under this heading (742, 743). To the line of Baanes and Mizizius and Bardanes-Philippicus is added a new pretender, son-in-law of the great Iconoclast by Anna his daughter, and father of Nicephorus. A civil war at this juncture was little short of disastrous for the fortunes of the commonwealth; Constantine to the end of his reign was hampered by the losses of this needless family quarrel. But it was more than a contested succession or a domestic sedition; it was a national movement. The troops concerned are *Armenians* and *Armeniacs*—that is, troops supplied by the princelings (like Hessians in the eighteenth century) serving as allies under the imperial standard, and troops stationed in the *Armeniac theme*, by origin and sympathy equally Oriental. At Modrina, on the Bithynian frontier of Phrygia, the patrician Tiridates lost his life, an Armenian and cousin of Artavasdus; and his soldiers refuse to yield, determined not to survive their compatriot or accept

quarter from aliens. These troops had long formed the flower of the Roman armies; and their obstinate valour led to a serious loss (Constant. Imp. *ad: imp: i.* 2). The Domestic sent to gather provisions for the beleaguered capital bears the same Armenian name as his master; and the chief minister and companion of Artavasdus' flight (743) is the patrician Βακταγεῖος (or with Zonaras better, Βακτάγγιος) in which we can easily read Vakhtang. Almost two centuries had elapsed, when the revolt was at last subdued, since Artaban's attempt on the life of Justinian in 548.— Ten years later, when Abbassid caliphs have supplanted Ommiads, and Pepinids the effete line of Clovis, when the Exarchate had been torn from the empire,—the East awakens to life once more. Chusan revolts against the Emir of Mesopotamia, at the same time Governor of Armenia; with the help of Roman troops he takes Melitenè and Theodosiopolis; Camakh (or Ani) as well, if we accept the account of Abulpharagius. Constantine V. adopts the transplanting policy of Justinian II.; from these towns he takes large numbers of heretics, and with them replenishes the terrible gaps left in his capital by the Great Pestilence. Scylitza (Cedrenus) calls them "kinsmen of the emperor; Armenian and Syrian schismatics" (*συγγενεῖς . . . Ἀρμεν. κ. Σύρους αἱρετικούς*), following Theophanes, the violent hater of the Iconoclasts. Probably they were Paulicians; and we shall find them later arguing with Alexius Comnenus at the close of the eleventh, and still existing in the nineteenth century, as a suspected but tolerated community in Thrace. Caliph Mansour fights with varying success; his forces are beaten back with discredit from the siege of Camakh (Ani), but he manages to rebuild Arsamosata (767) on the Euphrates, and in 771 he captures Samosata and Germanicea, the birthplace of the reigning dynasty, "decanting" the population into Palestine (*μετεποιήθη εἰς Παλαιστίνην*).—In 772 a Vardan is

Revolt of Artavasdus and transplantation of Constantine V.

Armenian monopoly of military command.

found in command of the Roman *theme* of the Armeniacs; and six years later (778) a great force of 100,000 men is raised under Leo IV., in which all the four generals of divisions are clearly of Armenian descent; Artavasdus of the *Anatolics*, Tatzates of the *Buccellarians*, Caristerotzes of the *Armeniacs*, Gregory, son of Mazalacius, of the *Obsicians;* the entire army being placed under the control of the famous old monk-hunting Michael Lachanodracon of the *Thracesians*. Tadjat is a favourite name with the Arzrounian and Gnounian princes; and it is interesting to notice that, thirty years after the rising of Artavasdus, his compatriots monopolise all the chief military posts, and as a consequence the entire government of Asia Minor. Little was accomplished by this vast and unwieldy host: but more Jacobite Syrians were transferred to Thrace; perhaps to act as a counterpoise or solvent to the Hellenic orthodoxy, against which the Armenian camarilla had declared a truceless war.

Vigorous policy of Harun; constant duel at Byzantium between Armenian generals and Orthodox reaction.

§ 2. In 780 a new and romantic figure claims our notice. Harun enters for the first time on the stage as governor of Aderbaidjan, a post in our own day allotted to a Persian heir-apparent. But the position included the control of Armenia; and by the side of the inexperienced prince was a faithful Barmecide as Secretary of State. With this year then begins a more vigorous and vexatious policy towards the lands of the empire; and at home a long and obscure series of conspiracies takes its start, aiming at the dethronement of Constantine VI. and Irene. Incessant intrigue and suspicion was the atmosphere in which moved the unfortunate half-brothers of Leo IV. Decorated with the empty titles of Cæsar or *Nobilissimus*, they became for more than thirty years a storm-centre and a rallying-point for the malcontents. The last intimation of their existence is found in the reign of the first Michael, when their dynasty had irretrievably passed away; though

a few who recalled the services of the "Isaurian" house looked with regret at the blinded princes, the blameless instruments or pretexts of revolution for so long a time. This year (780) sees the earliest attempt to place Nicephorus on the throne; and the plot includes the father of a future emperor, Bardas, general of the *Armeniacs*. Now in the dim light which fitfully illuminates a dark period we are left to surmise, and may often be led astray by an excessive interest in the meagre detail. But it seems impossible to avoid the following conclusions: that since the time of Leo the whole imperial forces in Asia had been in the hands of a small band of devoted Armenian adherents, who thoroughly sympathised, like Cromwell's Ironsides, with the policy of image-breaking and monk-hunting; that the Orthodox reaction looked to Irene the Athenian, strangely-mated consort of Leo IV.; that the last twenty years of the dynasty were not a mere household quarrel between a capable mother and a wayward son, with designing uncles in the background: rather was it a serious contest between two rival creeds, two rival methods of government. Irene represents Orthodoxy, pacific principles, and palace-control; the leaders of the army, represent a bluff and jovial worldliness, anti-clerical and undoctrinal, and an aggressive frontier policy. These incidents are treated elsewhere, in our estimate of the imperial position and its dangers. We must here restrict our attention to their *Armenian* aspects; yet it will not be easy to keep the threads apart, so closely interwoven is the national, the religious, the political issue. The Saracens' inroads, menacing all Asia Minor, begin anew in 781, the annual tournament, or rather purposeless slave-raid, which excites the impatience of the historian and the reader. Chief command of the imperial troops is entrusted to the eunuch John, significantly enough; not for the first time had the court found security in supplanting

Vigorous policy of Harun; constant duel at Byzantium between Armenian generals and Orthodox reaction.

Vigorous policy of Harun; constant duel at Byzantium between Armenian generals and Orthodox reaction.

a too popular general by a pliant agent of the palace, and some of the great Roman successes had been won by the latter. Eleutherius the exarch (619) was a eunuch, and perhaps owed his failure and death to the circumstance, and in 782, another, Theodore, was sent in command to Sicily. This is the first occasion for many years that we read of such an appointment, and no doubt it marked a deliberate purpose in the regency of Irene. The civil service, or rather the palace-clique, were to be pitted against the strength of the Armenian general, the military caste; and from this moment dates the tedious duel which fills all our later records to Alexius (1081). Michael Lachanodracon (who held command in Asia for forty years) and the Armenian Tatzates defeated the Arabs under the vigilant supervision of the eunuch, who desired, with the court, that the result of the battle should be neither too disastrous nor too triumphant; in the victory there must be a discreet and moderate exultation, and no single personality should stand out before the public gaze. Elmacin tells us that certain Greek troops fled to *Damsak*, lord of Malch (Μάλλος, in Thph. Μῆλον; in the *Miscella*, Milium); this will be, as *Batrik* of Patricius, an equivalent of Domesticus, already used for the chief commander in the East. We cannot avoid the conclusion that this *new* title implies that change of policy which placed all large forces under direct central control. In the next centuries the name *Domestic of the Schools* will be the invariable appellation of the generalissimo; but the *Schools* are the household troops, and their commander an emissary or a satellite of the palace.

Treason of Tatzates owing to hate of courtiers.

§ 3. The want of harmony between the two departments may well have emboldened Harun; he advances to Chrysopolis, near Chalcedon, without let or hindrance. Nicetas, a eunuch and a chief favourite with Irene, defended the town (called by Elmacin *al-Koumas*, the Count, by Ibn-al-athir, Koumas-al-

kawamis, Count of counts, on the analogy of Emir of emirs). Lachanodracon suffered a reverse, and turned to fly on the plain of Darenig in Lydia; 15,000 Romans perished. Nor was the panic at Constantinople allayed by the next item of intelligence—that Tatzates had passed over to the caliph, finding the insolence of the eunuch Stauracius insufferable. Long ago the *pretorian prefect*, despoiled of direct military command, had taken his revenge by controlling the stipends and the commissariat; now (true to the civilian policy) the accountant (λογοθέτης, whether of post or of exchequer) could harry the army corps by interference, formalities, and delay. Nor need we betray surprise if an Armenian Christian *magarizes;* it may well be that the crude belief of a Paulician or an Athingan was in fuller sympathy with Islam than with Christianity. In the dearth of evidence, we need not refer Tatzates to one or other of these heterodox sects: yet there is reason to think that, among the military caste, such views were more prevalent than the Greek Church would have us believe. And it is well to remind those who see in the Albigenses or Cathari the forerunners of Protestantism and the pure gospel, that in the Western sects, as in the Oriental, there was little distinctively Christian at all, either in dogma or in practice. The treason of Tatzates bore immediate fruit; invited as if to an honourable conference, the chief minister of Irene was seized by his advice, and held to ransom by the unscrupulous Harun. Disgraceful terms were dictated, and the empire paid 65,000 pieces of gold for the liberty of some menials of the court. Harun, contemptuous, gave the commonwealth a breathing space, which was employed by Irene (785) to reverse the Iconoclast policy at a formal council. The guard, whether from Puritan conviction or loyalty to the Isaurian memory, violently interrupted the conclave and menaced the Greek bishops with death. Irene treated the revolt

Treason of Tatzates owing to hate of courtiers.

Violent Armenian and military opposition to Images (785).

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with adroitness and clemency. A feint of a Saracen inroad allows her to transfer these Armenians across the Bosphorus, where they are at once disbanded; their wives and effects are sent after them, and they are forbidden to set foot in the capital city again. Meantime, Stauracius enrolled loyal Thracians in their place as the bodyguard of the sovereigns. So turned out the first attempt to roll away the Armenian incubus, as this court-party and the Orthodox Church without doubt believed. It is clear that the removal of the anti-Hellenic element could not have been complete; for the Armeniac guards play a considerable part in the revolution of 790. In the interval, Constantine VI. had emerged into manhood, and resented the trifling and ceremonious part allotted to the legitimate Augustus. He had suffered the great disappointment of his life in losing his romantic Western bride Rotrud (Ἐρυθρώ), and being forced to wed Maria, a beautiful and pious but humbly-born Paphlagonian. He was embittered and dangerous; Irene removed him, by her act exciting the deep displeasure of the Armeniacs. Alexius Mouschegh (Μωσηλέ), *Spathaire* and *Drungaire* of the night-watch, being sent to appease them (with singular short-sight), merely places himself at the head of a movement of his countrymen with which he felt in complete sympathy. The rest of the *Thematic* troops, curiously massed as it would seem within sight and reach of the capital, assemble and salute Constantine VI. sole emperor, who at once confirms Alexius in the captaincy of the *Armeniacs*. The fierce delight of old Michael Lachanodracon may be imagined, in the pleasing duty of administering an oath to the troops never to receive Irene as ruler: two years later he closed his restless career in battle against the Bulgars, 792.

First deposition of C. VI. frustrated by the Armenian troops.

C. VI. estranges his Armenian supporters.

§ 4. A third intrigue of the discontented with Cæsar Nicephorus enables Stauracius to implicate Alexis Mouschegh in the plot. Constantine blinds

his faithful servant on a false suspicion; and the superstitious noted with satisfaction that exactly five years later, in the very month of August, and on the same day of the week, he suffered the same penalty. The pent-up fury of the Armeniac troops broke out at this treatment of their general; they imprisoned Theodore Camulianus, sent to remonstrate with them, and cut to pieces a detachment, no doubt of Thracians (and amongst these we may note with some astonishment the commander's name, Constantine Ardashir, an Armenian). Terror prevailed at Constantinople; but the storm-cloud suddenly dissolved under the influence of money, as the violent factions had been appeased under Justinian. The year 797 is signalised both by the second and final dethronement of Constantine VI., and by two abortive attempts to elevate his uncle Nicephorus; the fourth plot of this unhappy puppet of a losing faction was followed by his banishment to Athens, whither the eunuch Stauracius sent him, lured from the safe asylum of S. Sophia. Here his partisans once more meditate revolt; but the citizens, devoted to Irene, and led by her brother the patrician Constantine Serantapêchys, save the government further trouble by inflicting blindness on all the brothers.

C. VI. estranges his Armenian supporters.

His removal; plots of the sons of C. V.

The presence of an insolent foe, in the heart of the empire and within sight of the capital, cannot have implied in those days the ignominy and panic, the paralysis of trade and government, which it would entail to-day. The reign of Irene was by no means wanting in dignity; but the strong Asiatic contingents must have been seriously weakened, and the frontier defence imperilled, when we read that in 798 the stables and horses of Irene and Stauracius, on the shores of the Bosphorus, were plundered by the Arabs, and that Peter, Count of *Obsicians*, was cut to pieces resisting with his band. It was perhaps in the same year as Charles' coronation as Western emperor, that the strange veto was placed

Peril of the capital

and removal of Irene by the Stauracian party.

Peril of the capital and removal of Irene by the Stauracian party.

by Irene on the intercourse of the military caste with this minister; and we only mention it here as a proof of the jealous separation of departments prevailing at this time, or perhaps inaugurated by the first female sovereign. Meantime, a plot was forming (800) within the precincts of the palace and the ministries, to deprive Irene as she had deprived her son. The historian is prepared to see in Nicephorus (descendant of the Ghassanid king Djabalas), a kinsman of the powerful eunuch, and to explain the sudden elevation of a civilian comptroller of the finances by the same unseen agency as raised Michael IV. to the throne in 1034. Masoudi and Abulpharagius agree in calling his father Istibrak, which may well be a version of Stauracius; and his son and successor bore the same name. Yet we must allow that the minister was by this time dead, and that his crafty brother looked for other supporters in his venture. On the disgrace or demise of his rival, the eunuch Aëtius divided between himself and his brother Leo the chief military command near the capital; he unites the colonelcy of *Obsicians* and *Anatolics*, giving Leo the European troops of Thrace and Macedonia. But the Stauracian party was not extinct. Seven eunuchs combine with rare unanimity in the cause of Nicephorus: Nicetas, already named, with three eunuch brothers of the Trefoil or Triphyllian family; and in the remaining three is found Gregory, son of Musalacius, who may be kinsman to the general of the *Obsicians* in 778.

Exceptional post created for Armenian general in Asia.

§ 5. It is hard to believe that the throne was quietly transferred, not from an individual but from a dynasty, without the connivance or approval of the strongest factor in the State. At all events Nicephorus took a very strong step in appointing Bardanes (Vartan) the Mamigonian, to an exceptional position in Asia, or at least in confirming him in the post (*μονοστρατηγὸς τῶν πέντε θεμάτων*, says Thph. and

his continuator) charged with (ἐφορεία and πρόνοια) the full oversight of all. It may be well surmised that on the death of Staurace a bolder policy was welcomed in regard to the East, and that in spite of the *civilian* jealousy of these exceptional military commissions, something like a dictatorship in Asia was invented to secure the frontier and restore peace to the interior. This office either dated from the latter days of Irene, or it was bestowed by Nicephorus,—in either case, Bardanes could not have been wholly ignorant of the revolution of 802, or wholly acquiescent unless he consented. Constantine Sathas has perhaps too sweepingly pronounced that changes on the throne from 700 to the Venetian capture in 1204 were invariably the work of the Asiatic troops. If so, the elevation of Nicephorus the Arabian provides a notable exception, unless we suppose that here, once more, an Armenian officer preferred to delegate rather than usurp the chief place. But his approval of Nicephorus was soon changed into hostility. His soldiers hurried along a path of perilous ambition a general who was brave, equitable in dividing the spoils, and animated by no friendly feeling towards a hated civilian exactor. Like some general in the third century, or like Julian in the fourth, he is forced to take the dangerous step by the urgent entreaties and threats of his men. Only the *Armeniacs* stood out, and their refusal is somewhat puzzling. Bardanes the Turk (ὁ τοῦρκος), who was no more an orthodox Christian than Nicephorus or Michael II., took the precaution (so runs the story) of consulting a wizard. The purple is promised to his two companions-in-arms, Leo and Michael, but he and Thomas are classed together as pretenders destined to fail. The two obscure captains, on whom rested the shadow of coming greatness, lost no time in separating themselves from a countryman who had aimed too high. Leo was the son of Bardas, who after holding com-

Exceptional post created for Armenian general in Asia.

His discontent and revolt.

His Armenian officer Leo joins Nicephorus.

His Armenian officer Leo joins Nicephorus.

mission as στρατηγὸς in Armenia under Leo IV., had joined the unsuccessful plot of 780, and had been whipped and cashiered. But his disgrace had not prejudiced his son's promotion in the ancestral art of the *condottieri*. His family claimed Arzrounian descent (κατήχθη γὰρ ἐκ τῶν Σεναχηρεὶμ, says George Monachus), a family or princely dynasty owning vast territory in Southern Armenia, towards the mountains of Kurdistan and Assyria. (The prevalent passion for tracing descent from Assyrian, Persian, or Armenian stock appears clearly in Leo, in Theophobus, and Theodora; lastly in Basil, the so-called Macedonian, whose pedigree was written up by Photius, to show a clear lineage from the Arsacidæ.) Nicephorus welcomed the friends of the pretender. Each received a post of trust and an estate of good emolument; Leo became chief of the *Federates* (φοιδεράτων), and enjoyed the imperial domain (βασιλικὸν οἶκον) of Zeno and Dagistheus: Michael was appointed count of the court (κομὴς κοόρτης), or seneschal of the imperial tent, and received the rents of the estate of Carianus. Once more, the only way to overcome an Armenian competitor was to depend on Armenian aid. The revolt ended in the flight of the regretful Bardanes, his entrance into a convent, and the sinister story of his loss of sight at the hands of some wild Lycaonians (λυκάνθρωποι, says Thph.). Public rumour asserted that these were sent by Nicephorus himself, though he not only denied complicity, but mourned seven days for his unhappy rival. Even if the worst side of the story be true (and we have every reason to distrust contemporary witness about Nicephorus I.), it says much for the humanity of the times that he thought it worth while to pretend sorrow for a punishment, which in any other age would have been deemed ridiculously inadequate.

Armenian conspirator only overcome by Armenian aid.

§ 6. Harun in 803 advanced right up to the Bosphorus, and this time he carried with him a tame

aspirant to the legitimate purple, Thomas, the son of Mousmar. This person has been supposed to be identical with the companion of Bardanes and the later rebel whose sedition wrought havoc throughout Lesser Asia. But the foreign authorities state that he claimed to be the "son of Constantine VI.," palpably impossible by computation of age, and wholly irreconcilable with the later "white hair" of the pretender of 823. Constantine VI. himself might have been just over fifty in the time of Michael II.; and we cannot conceive that one who claimed to be his son should then show marks of old age. No doubt he gave out that he was Constantine himself, a legitimate scion of a successful dynasty, still popular with a large number of the subjects of Rome. Harun knew, and in secret scorned, the imposture, but he outwardly treated the pretender Constantine with the respect due to his dignity. But this bold enterprise, like all the incursions of Harun, had no result; and the militant caliph of romance died in 809, having wrought great and purposeless mischief to the Roman commonwealth. In 806 Bardanes Anemas, clearly an Armenian minister, was charged (so the authorities report) to reduce the settlers in Thrace to the level of imperial serfs, tilling imperial demesne-land. Once again in 808, an Armenian appears as plotting against the emperor, Araates, of Camsar extraction, and *quæstor* (or chancellor); Nicephorus, with the tired or ironical clemency characteristic of his reign, cut his hair and sent him to meditate in a Bithynian monastery. Our accounts of Nicephorus come from garbled and prejudiced sources; and it is from Abulpharagius that we learn that he was a gallant prince, by no means despised by his Oriental foes or invariably unsuccessful in warfare. It cannot be denied that his attachment to Hellenic orthodoxy, or even to Christianity, lay under deserved suspicion. I am not inclined to dismiss summarily, as the unscrupulous

A false Constantine VI. supported by Harun.

Armenian ministers and conspirators.

Armenian ministers and conspirators.

scandal of political or religious partisans, the stories of his heretic sympathies or pagan practices. He was the cordial friend (διάπυρος φιλὸς) of Manichees, that is, of Paulicians, whom he allowed to found a little State in Armenia. Like Michael, he consorted with the mysterious Athingans of Phrygia; his Lycaonians were not merely rough henchmen but disseminators of heresy. He consulted gipsies and soothsayers; he submitted to a rite resembling the Mithraic *taurobolium*. If he was not, like Leo, a determined Iconoclast, it was merely because he was devoid of religious conviction; himself of Arabian descent, he reminds one of the Morescoes—an outward conformity concealing an utter indifference.

Success and elevation of Leo the Armenian (813).

Leo the "Assyrian" was made by him στρατηγὸς of the *Armeniacs*, and, like his greater "Isaurian" namesake just one hundred years earlier, he lost his military chest—not this time through treachery, but by carelessness. The emperor is content with a beating and a sentence of exile. He owed his advancement to a victory over Thebith in an Arabian inroad; and to a curious act of perfidy at the great battle of Adrinople, in which, following so soon after the death of Nicephorus, every other empire but the Byzantine must have succumbed (June 22, 813). It is perhaps unwise to trust the biassed and clerical historians; and the same doubtful tale is told of Decius' successor, Gallus (251), and of Romanus I. (919). In any case, Leo had not lost the affection of his Oriental troops, or the confidence ot the capital. It is more than likely that the *Armeniacs* were determined to make something out of their employment on a European shore, outside their own province, and to claim the usual prerogative of the troops of Anatolia in creating and unmaking princes.

§ 7. Over these important forces, at least over the *Armeniacs*, Leo V. placed Manuel, an Armenian and a Mamigonian. His own son Sembat he created

colleague and Augustus, changing his name to the ever-popular Constantine, like Leo III., whom he set before him as his model. John the Grammarian is made patriarch of the Morochorzenian clan; his father Bagrad or Pagrat (Παγκράτιος), and his brother Arsharis (Ἀρσαρὴς) sufficiently display their nationality. Leo is displaced by another bold and ignorant soldier of fortune, Michael of Amorium; and in the absence of any legal ruler, the succession is contested with equal right by Thomas, son of Mousmar. I will not here dwell on the peculiar character of this revolt (821–3). The *Obsicians* and *Armeniacs* did not join the pretender, but his ranks were swelled not merely by needy Socialists but by Saracen subsidies and detachments of Parsee dualists. It was a strange assortment; Thomas himself was called indifferently a Slavonian, a Scythian, or the son of a Byzantine emperor; and his host represented every race, creed, and nation of the East. Twice he attacked the capital; and fell at last, no doubt because he could not undermine the loyal attachment of the Armenians to the candidate who was first in the field. The short reign of Michael II. gave little prognostic of the future splendour of the dynasty. Crete was torn away (824), and continued in detachment until its recovery by Phocas under Romanus II. (962). Sicily was almost entirely lost to the Saracens (827), and the slender cord of sentiment or tribute which bound the remote Dalmatian coast was snapped, if we may trust the terse and summary dictum of Scylitza (Cedrenus) (Ἀπεστάτησε πᾶσα ἡ Δαλματία). Indeed, like Gallienus (260–268), the emperor merely joked about the loss of territory as modifying the toil of his office. There were not wanting those who reminded him that with a few more such lightenings of labour, the imperial dignity would become superfluous. Indeed, it seems quite clear that the heart, the vigour, and the policy of Rome lay solely in the Armenian mountains. The

Success and elevation of Leo the Armenian (813).

Serious menaces to the State under Michael II.

Armenian help and alliance indispensable to Rome.

Armenian help and alliance indispensable to Rome.

steadiness of the Eastern frontier during the reigns of Leo V. and Michael II., the restoration of order and plenty after Thomas' destructive insurrection, were due to the loyalty of Asiatic troops under Manuel; and the true inner history of the empire should be written rather from some frontier citadel in the East than from the palace in the capital. The real and serious happenings might be told by tracing not the series of pageant emperors but the records of Manuel, John Curcuas (920–942), or Nicephorus Phocas and Zimisces: and these do less for the commonwealth in the purple than as simple generals of the East. So indispensable was the Armenian influence that we may at once discount the pleasing legend of the marriage of Theophilus. Policy, not whim or accident, dictated such an alliance. Theodora is a niece of the brave champion of the East, and the whole family are staunch Armenians and marry husbands of the same nation; her sister Mary is found united to Arshavir, a μάγιστρος, possibly the brother of the patriarch John. Throughout the reign (829–842), Manuel and Theophobus the "Persian" are the principal commanders; Theophobus is rewarded by the highest dignities of the realm, the hand of the emperor's sister, Helen, and at last by suspicion, disgrace, and death.

Services to the empire of Armenia under Theophilus; Alexis and Theophobus.

§ 8. From Persarmenia too comes Babec, for five years rebel against the suzerain caliph (*c.* 831), with 7000 men of his own country. These settled at Sinope, like the Mardaites at Attalia, formed an independent military commonwealth, raised their numbers to fourteen and subsequently to thirty thousand, and gave the court anxious moments when they desire to restore a *national* monarchy in the person of Theophobus. For he succeeded to the captaincy of the formidable band on Babec's death; and the "Persians" are loaded with favours and legal privileges; intermarriage is permitted and encouraged; and the soldiers rise to the highest titles and places in

the military service of the empire (βασιλικοῖς ἀξιώμασιν, κωδίξι στρατιωτικοῖς). Theophanes' continuator tells us with pardonable hyperbole, ὅλον ἔθνος ὑπήκοον, and Leo Grammaticus adds the significant item that down to his day there are detachments called τοῦρμαι περσῶν in all the *themes*,—whose origin we shall presently have occasion to remark. These troops surround Theophilus the "unfortunate" in the disastrous battle of 835; and Manuel saves his life. In the same year Manuel, more an ally than a subject, crosses over to the caliph; and having repented him of his *magarizing*, is welcomed with open arms by Theophilus and obtains the title of *Magister* and *Domestic of the Schools*. This easy exchange of masters must excite our surprise; but the "Persians" or Pers-armenians had brought their traditional policy with them into the imperial service. Naturally desirous of independence, they had played off one illustrious power against the other, had received an Arsacid ruler of alien race, had coquetted with Sassanids, and had paid tribute to the caliph. Religious disputes had prevented a genuinely cordial attachment to their proper suzerain. A purely *feudal* system of society had put annexation under a centralised bureaucracy out of the question, and had rendered suspicious the proffers of Armenian help or the entreaties of Armenian distress. It is not unlikely that the perplexing and meteor-like career of another compatriot may be traced to the suspicions of the court and ministries; and we may assume that the young Alexis Mouschegh (Μωσηλὲ) owed his elevation and his downfall to the indirect influence of the Armenian faction. Might not Theophilus, alarmed not without reason at the rising fame of his wife's brother, burdened with a debt of gratitude to her uncle, desire to find a rival to this coalition, and find it only in another Armenian? Distinguished in the defence of Sicily, Alexis was summoned home to receive the successive steps of *patrician*, *proconsul*,

Services to the empire of Armenia under Theophilus; Alexis and Theophobus.

Services to the empire of Armenia under Theophilus; Alexis and Theophobus.

magister (always an especial honour), and lastly Cæsar: revival of a title not employed since Constantine V. gave it charged with misery to his cadets. He is betrothed to the emperor's daughter, and sent again to Sicily as its *General* and *Duke*. But on the death of the infant princess, and on the birth of a son, afterwards Michael III., Theophilus, amidst the envious voices of courtiers, had no longer the same need of his services or the same confidence in his loyalty. He was recalled, whipped, and immured in a dungeon; and as speedily reinstated in favour and dignities. But Alexis and his brother Theodosius were weary of such vicissitudes, and retired at the moment of the final triumph of innocence into a cloister. In 837 occurred the famous proclamation of Theophobus as king not of Rome but of the Persians: the troops were distributed through the older *themes* of Asia, and the suspicion leads in the end (842) to the murder of Theophobus, the last act of the dying emperor. Next year we find Armenia wholly attached to the caliphate: following its armies are the chief of the Bagratids and the leader of Vasparacan, the former bearing the title "Prince of princes," while the latter, Ashot, Arzrounian, and therefore kinsman of Leo V., bore that of simple "Prince." With this rapid increase in Armenian influence in the high places of the empire, this practical monopoly of Armenian defence in the imperial military system—this curious antipathy to Rome in the land itself—we pass to a new age, an established dynasty, and the altered policy of pretenders or rather regents, all of Armenian birth.

Armenia itself attached to caliphate.

VI

ARMENIANS WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE EMPIRE FROM MICHAEL III. (842), TO THE END OF ROMANUS I. (944)—(840–940)

Roman expeditions to N.E.; Bardas and Theoctistus.

§ 1. Theoctistus the eunuch, chief minister of the young prince, looked eastwards for the warrior's laurels which always eluded him. In 843 he led an expedition to the eastern shores of the Euxine to bring succour to the people of Lazica, or rather, if we look more closely, to punish a revolt. For the Arabs had not in effect penetrated so far; they held in vassalage, especially when the emir of Melitenè took the lead (838), the feudal princes of our Oriental Poland, but they had not yet challenged Roman supremacy on the Black Sea or among the tribes of the Caucasus. Yet the Roman Empire was very weak in those climes, and the abolition of Chersonese autonomy under Theophilus, so much regretted and censured by historians, may well have been a necessary act. It involved a permanent garrison and military law in a district threatened by Patzinaks and Russians, and half-way between the capital and its dubious vassals or allies in Abasgia. Some years before, 832, Bardas and Theophobus had been sent on a similar enterprise; and neither seems to be attended with any conclusive results. It would appear that all loyal Armenians had sought refuge and settlements on Roman ground, leaving the *magarizing* faction to swell the armies of Islam. This alone can account for the diversity of feeling between the trustworthy officers of the Roman army (if we except Manuel's lapse), and the antipathy of the natives in their own country. We have now arrived at the most notable instance of Armenian success,—Basil the Macedonian, Armenian and Arsacid; whose mother's family descended from the great Constantine; who boasted on both sides Alexander of Macedon

Rise and elevation of Basil the Armenian.

Rise and elevation of Basil the Armenian.

as ancestor. His forefathers (deriving from the Christian king Tiridates) claimed the hospitality of the Roman Empire, either, as was then believed (Genesius), in the days of Leo I. (457–474), under whom they settled in Macedonian Nice; or as Saint Martin with more likelihood, under the great Justinian, when Artaban and his kin entered the imperial service. That the story of Armenian colonists is not purely mythical is clear from the mention of Cordylus and his son *Bardas* at the time of Crum's ravages, 810–820 (during which time the latter, obviously of Armenian birth, was chief of a Macedonian settlement beyond the Danube); from the name of Basil's brother, Sembat (Συμβάτιος, Geo. Mon.). And it must be obvious to the student that "Macedonian" is a *vox nihili;* there was no settled population of the Balkan peninsula that predated the Slavonic incursions except in the towns; and it is clear that Basil was not a Slav, and that his elevation was not a revenge for the failure of Thomas (823). On the other hand, we must not press unduly the serious motives or deliberate policy which raised the handsome groom who was neither soldier nor civilian. It was no military nomination such as we have in other Roman and Byzantine pretenders, called in to retrieve the errors or neglect of a worn-out dynasty. We must leave it as an instance of capricious selection by a legitimate monarch of a colleague, whose tact disarmed envy and hostility and enabled him to rise to an unchallenged and sovereign position from the murder of his benefactor. The first act of Basil was to display his veneration for his ancient fatherland; in 867, he heard from an Armenian bishop that a Bagratid prince had the right to crown the head of the house; just as in later time the solemn act of coronation has become the privilege of certain archiepiscopal sees. Basil despatched Nicetas to Ashot I., founder, amid the disorders of the caliphate, of the Bagratid

Basil invested by the new Bagratid monarch.

line of kings; he sent him in reply a rich crown, and Nicodemus carried back a grateful letter from the emperor addressed to "my beloved son." This interchange of courtesies was maintained during the reign of Leo VI. *Basil invested by the new Bagratid monarch.*

§ 2. In the plot against Bardas the regent (866), Sembat, his son-in-law, Armenian and Bagratid, was an accomplice with his own brother Bardas; and the truly Oriental list of conspirators includes besides, an Assyrian, a Chaldean (from near Trebizond), and a Bulgarian. In the same year the disappointed schemer Sembat rebelled against the influence of Basil, now a full associate in the empire and charged with all its serious business. He is reduced by Nicephorus Maleïnus, an Armenian noble of one of those prolific and warlike families which produced the Phocas and Zimisces of the next century. In 872 Basil in an Eastern expedition receives, like some German emperor, the repentant homage of a brigand chief, Curticius, who from the safe fastness of Locano's castle had secured wide territory and wrought havoc on Roman land; this petty feudal tyrant brings over his men-at-arms with him. In 879 occurred another Armenian conspiracy which introduces us to a notable name. John Curcuas (Gourgenes?) captain of the *Hicanates* (ἱκανᾶτοι, a corp dating from *c.* 800), lured, like many other usurpers, by a lying soothsayer, attempted to secure a throne, for which, as it seemed, the sole condition was Armenian descent. He lost his sight, and his partisans were whipped. One cannot wonder at the severity with which divination was pursued in the empire (*e.g.* under Valens, *c.* 370), when designing men worked on empty and credulous brains with such hopes. The treason of Bardas had not harmed the career of Leo V., his son; and it is a pleasing trait in Byzantine manners that military promotion was bestowed on the sons of traitors. Curcuas the younger, in the next century, hero of a prose-epic in eight books, is the guardian of the *Notable Armenian families emerge; Maleïnus, Curcuas, Phocas, Argyrus.*

Notable Armenian families emerge; Maleïnus, Curcuas, Phocas, Argyrus.

Eastern frontier and fitting companion of the great warriors of his nation, Phocas and Zimisces. And, indeed, about this time (880) emerged the first Phocas (Nicephorus) to attain renown; he had served with ability and courage against the Western Saracens in Sicily, and about 886 was sent to curb their Eastern kinsmen. Leo VI. pays him a generous tribute for his ready inventiveness in strategy: and for over a century there will be few years unmarked by the valour or the revolt of a Phocas. He desolated Cilicia up to the gates of Tarsus; for the border wars were still merely forays, raids of *vendetta*, without fixed policy. In 891, he is "Governor of Lydia"; and for many years formed an iron bulwark to the east frontier, ravaging Syria and checking any advance of Islam. He left three sons, Michael, Leo, and Bardas. Another family of repute emerges at this time, that of Argyrus;—Leo was sent by Michael III., *c.* 850, against the Paulician stronghold of Tephricè; his grandson Eustathius is a great territorial magnate in Charzianè (Cappadocia), whither after good service to the State he is banished: his recall or rather exile to his lands being procured by the envy of a friend Himerius. He may well have belonged to a family of settlers originally Armenian; but he is at any rate a good instance of a type meeting us with increasing frequency,—the military leader and feudal lord, having great possessions in a certain district; in the intervals of warlike duties exercising there the functions of a clan-chieftain among kinsmen, of a landlord among serfs.

Intimate and tactful relations of Leo VI. with Armenia: expansion of empire towards East.

§ 3. Leo VI. continued the policy of his (putative ?) father, and drew closer the bonds of Roman-Armenian alliance. Ashot I. visits the Roman court at some time early in the reign (perhaps in 888) and left a detachment of troops, who were employed against the Bulgars. The captain was Melric or Mel (and I am unable to sympathise with M. Brosset in identi-

fying him with Curticius); we shall hear again of this captain. Escaping from this unsuccessful encounter, Mel is reported to have returned with his band to Lesser Armenia, founded a fort in Lycandus (district of Dchahan) and enabled Leo VI. to boast that another *theme* was added to the empire under his sway: (when somewhat later we find Arabians writing of "*Mleh Demeslicos*" it is impossible not to connect the name with this captain). In 893 Leo received envoys from Sembat, the new Bagratid king, to apprise him of his succession; they paid homage, and it is said that the two sovereigns exchanged gifts each year during this reign. Towards the close of the century (perhaps in 898), Gregory (Γρήγορις), son of Vahan, the Bagratid prince of Taron, came into somewhat peculiar relations with the empire: like many of his peers, he was careful to keep on friendly terms with both powers. His doubtful faith was reported at court; and he imprisoned the two Armenians who, as he supposed, had carried the tale. But they had a powerful advocate in King Sembat, their kinsman; and he asks the emperor to secure their deliverance from duress. Gregory sends a hostage to court, and is so charmed by his treatment there, and the kindness of Leo, that he releases the two captives under escort of his brother Apoughan. He came himself to Constantinople and received the title μάγιστρος, while his brother was made patrician; and the firm alliance was ratified by a marriage within the imperial house. In the latter years of his reign, Leo achieved a similar diplomatic triumph, and once more added a *theme* to the provinces of the empire: three brothers, owners of land beyond the Euphrates, north of Melitenè, gave themselves up to the emperor as his "men"; and, like Melias or Mel, received back their canton as the *theme* of Mesopotamia, of which one of the three became the first governor. Private enterprise thus became the pioneer of Imperialism.

Intimate and tactful relations of Leo VI. with Armenia: expansion of empire towards East.

Multiplication of petty sovereignties in Armenia in decay of caliphate.

§ 4. To the student, it is clear that the principles and methods, the rules and conditions, of feudalism were perfectly understood and practised by the Roman court long before the Crusaders brought eastwards the name "liegeman" (λίζιος) and the formal constitution of the kingdom of Jerusalem. Evidently Leo VI. took full advantage of the disorders and incoherence which these feudal tendencies produced in Armenia. Everywhere the example of the disintegrating caliphate was eagerly followed by the princelets. Kingdoms (of the smallest extent and most precarious tenure) are multiplied; every noble claims for clan or manor complete immunity; and family divisions increase the number and weaken the power of minute sovereign states. The Roman Empire was the residuary legatee amid such confusion. It alone stood upright in the ruins of the Orient,—an orderly, amiable, and peaceful commonwealth, mild in its laws, Christian in its belief, tactful and courteous in its dealings with lesser potentates. Greater Armenia was portioned out, like mediæval Germany, between nobles who strove to maintain independence against Roman and Saracen alike. Such was "Cricorice" of Taron, between Taurus and Euphrates, in whose strange name we recognise the diminutive of Gregory, Gregoritza (as from Theophilus we have Θεοφιλίτζης, the early patron of Basil). There is "Symbaticius" (a similar Grecized form for "little Ṣembat") who might claim to be the chief of these petty sovereigns; he bore the title "Prince of princes" and ruled undisputed from Kars to Lake Van, a district henceforth called Vasparacan. There is besides the northerly Iberian prince, Adranasar, still enjoying, of hereditary right rather than by direct imperial collation, the dignity of "*Curopalat.*" The relation between these feudal princes and the empire strongly resembled the nominal vassalage of the Mongolian or Tibetan chiefs to the court of Pekin. The emperor in each case received presents, or

perhaps "tribute"; but was expected to surpass the costliness of these gifts by lavish munificence, and to pension superannuated scions of the princely houses and dignify the rural clan-leader with some imperial dignity. He provided wives (as under Justinian I. in Colchis) from noble and senatorial families at home: he exchanged lands inside the safer circuit of the empire for districts of peril beyond the Euphrates. To this policy must be largely attributed the extension of the empire to the shores of the Caspian, which took place quietly enough in the next hundred years. Of these records we hear little amidst the din of the Bulgarian campaign and the more brilliant and less durable victories in the lower East.

Multiplication of petty sovereignties in Armenia in decay of caliphate.

§ 5. In 911 (the year of Leo's demise) Sembat I., king of Armenia, was reduced to hopeless impotence by the insubordinate nobles. He had recourse to the empire; and John Catholicos is in error in naming *Basil* as the object of his entreaties. But Leo dies, and Alexander was by no means inclined to venture on a distant enterprise. To the troubled dignity his son, Ashot II., succeeds in 914; who, like some chivalrous Gothic king in Spain, forms a chosen band and harries the Moslem. He secures the crown rather in virtue of his exploits against the unbeliever than as a birthright. He chases Arabs from Tiflis, and ravages Aderbaijan. He allied with "Aternerseh" (the Adranasar mentioned above), Bagratid king of Iberia, who had secured the kingly title (*c.* 900) by the direct recognition of Sembat I., happier in his external relations than in his domestic policy. This coalition, joined by Gourgenes, king of Abasgia, reduced or overawed the petty feudal tyrants and secured the coronation of Ashot II. in 915. Royalty saw in the emperor a suzerain and a champion, fount of honour and legitimate dispenser of dignities; aristocracy preferred the Moslem alliance. Under the not incapable regency of Zoe (914) a Vasparacanian prince offered aid against the

Appeal of Armenian king to empire (911).

Appeal of Armenian king to empire (911).

Saracens ; and Constantine VII. in his first brief rule follows a sympathetic policy with regard to Ashot II., confronted with a perilous confederacy of Moslem governors and his own unruly nobles. The emperor was astonished that the willing assistance of the empire had not been solicited. A Greek patriarch condescends to write to the heretical Armenian *Catholicos* a letter of friendly sympathy and advice : "The emperor is sincerely concerned at the distress of Armenia, and begs you to rouse the kings to united efforts on its behalf." John the *Catholicos* succeeded with Adranasar II. and obtained his aid ; while Gourgenes wrote in reply to the emperor a letter which is curiously typical of the attitude of these kings of the East to Rome : "Only give us an asylum in the empire and all Armenians will follow us across the border and will settle there and become loyal subjects." The emperor (who was now Romanus Lecapenus, 920) invited Ashot the "Iron" and John to Constantinople ; the latter refuses, not wishing to scandalise his flock by communicating with heretics who accepted the detested Council of Chalcedon ; the former is warmly welcomed, and returns with prestige and hopefulness enhanced to an enthusiastic people, already beginning to repair the damage of successive Moslem inroads. A small Roman force secures the submission of two recalcitrant cities or forts ; and are then sent back with a wise confidence in the native allegiance. Ashot is now joined by his brother Abbas, returning from his refuge with the grand prince of Abasgia, whose daughter he married. With this the fortunes of the little kingdom began to revive. But the same hindrances stood in the way of any certain alliance ; the distaste of the feudal nobility for the methods of Rome ; the prejudice of the people at large against the "heretical council." We may anticipate a few years in order to supply another instance—in 926, Gagic or Cakig, king of Vasparacan, earnestly desired

Consistent Imperialism of Armenian royalty ; nobles and people thwart alliance.

to conclude an alliance with the empire. But the lords protested, and hurled at the diplomacy and arms of the "Greeks" those taunts of faithlessness and cowardice, which have been re-echoed down to the present day. The clergy insist on a reconciliation of the Churches before a national alliance is suggested. The king therefore wrote to the Byzantine patriarch, pointing out the trivial points (as he considered them) of disagreement between the hostile creeds, and the greater and nobler issues at stake in a confederacy of two Christian powers against a common foe. But the letter remained unanswered; the tolerant and broad-minded monarch was before his time; and an immaterial discrepancy on a subtle point of metaphysics prevented the alliance. In the latter days of the Eastern empire the reunion of the Churches failed for a similar reason.

Consistent Imperialism of Armenian royalty; nobles and people thwart alliance.

§ 6. Once more the Taronites on the hither side of Lake Van claim our attention. Here, as elsewhere in feudal and limited monarchies permeated by family feeling, a system of patrimonial subdivision was in vogue. At Gregory's death, the province of Taron was portioned between his children; and in 926 (the same year we have just been considering) Bagrat, a son, visits the Roman capital and marries a daughter of Theophylact, a close kinsman of the regent-emperor Romanus I., whose father (it will be remembered) bore the same name. He was also created a *patrician*, and received investiture for that district of the Taronite principality (the Armenian "Saxony") which recognised suzerainty. About the same time his cousin Thornic (in which we clearly see the later title *Tornicius*, a rebel under the tenth Constantine) surrendered his hereditary lands to the empire, on condition of receiving an equivalent at the Byzantine court,—Constantinople being not merely the goal of barbarian greed, but the Mecca or (if it be preferred) the Paris of Armenian nobles. Sembat, his brother, followed the pre-

Submission of the Taronites to the empire (c. 930).

Submission of the Taronites to the empire (c. 930).

cedent, and sank into a dignified pensioner in the capital; only Vahan, the third, remained in his native province; thus the Taronite family divided its members between the luxurious comfort of Byzantium and the exacting duties of clan-chieftaincy.—

Extension of Roman influence by diplomacy and by war.

But the empire was not merely a diplomatic dealer in alliance, pensions, and orders, it could maintain its cause in the last resort by force of arms. Desultory warfare (not easy to distribute in years or campaigns) meets us from the last year of Leo VI. Lalacon, with the *Armeniac* troops, is sent to ravage Colchis; and Catacalon, his successor, recovers Theodosiople (near Arzeroum), sacks Phasianè, and humbles the pride of some mysterious foe, variously supposed to be the Colchians or the Saracens: neither purport nor event of these expeditions is clear. A dispute ensued with the king of Iberia, who quietly occupied Theodosiople on the retirement of the Roman troops under Catacalon. Remonstrance was made on the part of the empire, but it was finally agreed that the Araxes should be the limit of Roman authority, and all territory to the north should be surrendered to Iberia. Curcuas, soon succeeding for his brilliant twenty-two years' defence of the frontier, turned his attention rather to the southern district and to Vasparacan. In the neighbourhood of Lake Van many cities seemed to be occupied chiefly by Moslem; and when he reduced the towns of Akhlat and Bitlis he granted terms to the inhabitants on this curious and significant condition—that a cross should be planted in the middle of the mosque. We may well pause for a moment to contrast the demands of a strong central government with the fanciful and trivial stipulations of feudal tenure, flattering to vanity, but useless as a guarantee of service or fidelity. Religious piety about this term dictated a somewhat costly bargain, when very substantial concessions (both of captives and advantages) were made by Romanus I. (942) to secure the miraculous veil of Edessa.

§ 7. Such, then, were the relations of the empire with the petty Christian kingdoms and principalities of the East down to the retirement of the regents (944, 945). The period had been prolific in bringing to birth fresh independent sovereignties. The country from the Caucasus to Kurdistan was a motley patch-work (like mediæval Germany), not merely of immune baronies but of full-blown royalties, multiplying and vulgarising the regal title. Over all these miniature kingdoms or principalities the Roman Empire exercised a potent charm. Except by the sovereign, the masterful and methodic system was not beloved; the nobles disliked its rigour, the clergy its doctrine. But it was the secure and dignified asylum for the dispossessed exile; it was the sole fount of honour in bestowing those empty titles and positions which from Clovis onwards had secured the homage of powerful kings. Certainly at the end of this epoch the ties are very much closer than at the beginning; and there is no waning in the preponderating influence which the Armenian race exercised *within* the empire and in the imperial service. Lecapenus is a member of this militant caste or aristocracy, inured to arms from childhood and invariably following the ancestral craft: his father Theophylact saved Basil's life, and one of the last acts of Leo VI. was to appoint the son High Admiral. Like Nicephorus Phocas (963) and Romanus IV. (1067), he rises to place and power against the anxious interest of the courtiers, by the favour of an empress and his own troops. He upheld, not unworthily, the repute of Rome, and after a quarter of a century gave way to a "legitimate" monarch, whom at one time he could have displaced without peril. The chief Armenian hero of the time is John Curcuas, who in his long Eastern lieutenancy quietly prepared the way for the more familiar achievements of Phocas and Zimisces. Son of the blinded pretender, whose failure we have noticed (879),

Universal suzerainty of Rome in Armenia.

Exploits and success of Curcuas the Armenian.

Exploits and success of Curcuas the Armenian.

he became sergeant of *gendarmerie*, and arrested some conspirators in 919. In 920 he went eastward with wide and ample powers: defended Syria and Euphrates, repressed the Moslem, and overthrew a significant plot of Bardas Boïlas to erect an independent Armenian governorship within the empire and imitate the emirs of the caliphate, who like the imperial counts of the West were daily claiming independence. (This is variously referred to the years 924 and 936.) This rebellion again excited the infidel to reap profit from Roman dissensions. But Curcuas never lost a battle; he carried fire and sword into their country, recovered Malatiyah, and employs its colleague-emirs as trusty allies. When on their death the town again closes its gates against the empire, Curcuas with Melias of Lycandus (a feudal warrior-chief, but also a loyal subject) again reduces and razes it to the ground. Once more the Euphrates flowed "under Roman laws." The troops of Curcuas were recognised as the flower of the army, and the most efficient force in the empire; in a Russian peril they are hastily summoned across the continent to take part in the capital's defence (941). It was Curcuas who really began the great work of consolidation on the Eastern frontier with a resolute design which never faltered. Himself born in Lesser Armenia, son of a soldier, he is the father of Romanus Curcuas, a captain of distinction under Nicephorus in the pursuit of the same policy. His brother Theophilus, Δοὺξ of Chaldia, is noticed as a strenuous provincial governor, and was the grandfather of Zimisces. Curcuas became a popular hero (his life was written by Manuel in eight books, unfortunately lost), and he suffered at the close of his career the usual penalty reserved for Armenians of warlike ability. Here the envious or vindictive influence is not a secluded sovereign warring against private wealth or merit (as in some Eastern court), but the Byzantine official world. He was accused of treason-

able designs, and perhaps the idle sons and colleagues of Romanus were induced to join in the charge. The emperor refused to believe, and despatched secret (and happily impartial) envoys to inquire on the spot into the behaviour of Curcuas. Their report disposed of the cabal, and reinstated the general. Romanus, to mark his approval and delight, proposed to ally the houses of the sovereign-regent and the generalissimo; Constantine VIII.'s son was to be betrothed to Euphrosyne. Once more, the autocrat is helpless and overborne; the court is again aroused to bitter hostility; and Romanus, with the deep regret of Charles I., sacrifices his brave defender to a lighter fate. He is cashiered and supplanted by Pantherius, a kinsman of the reigning house: according to a custom in favour at Rome, Damascus, and Bagdad alike, of entrusting the highest posts only to those who had nothing to gain, and everything to lose, by disloyalty.

Exploits and success of Curcuas the Armenian.

VII

RELATIONS OF ARMENIA AND ARMENIANS TO THE EMPIRE, FROM THE SOLE REIGN OF CONSTANTINE VII. (945) TO THE DEPOSITION OF MICHAEL V. (1042) —(940–1040)

§ 1. The close of the reign of Romanus I. had been marked in Armenia by religious disputes which left their sting and trace. About 940, Ber, king of Georgian Abasgians (another puzzling subdivision), presented himself with a large force before Kars, where King Abbas, son of Sembat the Bagratid, was about to consecrate a patriarchal church; and requested that the rite employed should be Georgian. Suspecting his motive, Abbas, after fruitless parleying, attacked and captured Ber. In the following years the unappeasable enmity of Greeks and Armenians

Religious differences separate Armenia from Rome.

Religious differences separate Armenia from Rome.

became apparent and gave rise to serious dissension, such as we may witness to-day in Liverpool or Belfast. Devout Armenians fly from disorder to the lands of Shirak and Little Vanand; and to end the conflict, once more a patriarch Vahanic has the courage to propose the acceptance of Chalcedon, so that Armenia might worship in communion with the Greek and Georgian rite. As with the complaisant Esdras under Heraclius, the popular indignation vented itself against the renegade and compelled him to flee into Vasparacan. About the same time, religion had led to a singularly disadvantageous compact; at the price of the Saviour's letter to Abgarus of Edessa, the emir had secured the Roman promise (for what it was worth) never to war against Edessa, Hara, Sroudj, and Samosata. The reigns of Constantine VII. and his son were free from Armenian complications; but the influence of the emigrant nobles who formed the military caste in Roman society was daily increasing. When Bringas (963), the civil minister, cannot induce Marianus Apambas, general of Italy, to compass the overthrow of Nicephorus Phocas, he applies to Zimisces and his cousin, Romanus Curcuas,—the one, patrician-general of the East, and related in some way to Nicephorus; the other full of hereditary valour, and son of the brave defender of the border from 920–942. (*Tchemchkik* is an Armenian word of doubtful meaning, which may be found in our maps to-day, but *-kik* is a diminutive, and *Tchemch* is a Persian word meaning "majestic"; and the whole might imply a humorous oxymoron. Ducange believes that the reading in Leo Diaconus should be μοιρακίτζης, and that the Greek equivalent means "*youth*.") Of noble family or clan, his mother was in some degree connected with Nicephorus (as cousin ?), and he was the great-nephew of the famous Curcuas and grandson of his brother Theophilus, governor of Chaldia. (It is curious to note that Curcuas becomes *Gourgen* in

Rise and elevation of Zimisces the Armenian.

the Armenian chronicles.) Six years later, Zimisces consented to be an accomplice and agent in the plot he so indignantly rejected in 963; to Phocas succeeded an Armenian regent. He took the young emperors, aged 11 and 8, from their retreat in Vasacavan, which under Nicephorus had been chosen for their exile or their safety; and he surrounds himself with a special bodyguard of Armenian *fantassins* (Asolik on 971); of the services of the Armenian infantry under Phocas we have already heard in Leo Diac. and Abulpharagius.

Rise and elevation of Zimisces the Armenian.

§ 2. As the object of Basil, his ward and pupil, was the consolidation of lands in Europe, so before the eyes of Zimisces floated the ideal of a crusader. He aimed at the recovery of Jerusalem, Syria, and Mesopotamia. A great force is collected under "Mleh Demeslicos" (is not this a scion of the family of Melias, creator and governor of Theme Lycandus under Leo VI.?[1]); and in spite of the covenant of Romanus I., the army ravages the lands of Edessa, takes Nisibis and Amida (Diarbekir), and fills the country with carnage. A reverse before Amida brings the emperor out in person; he penetrated into the Taron district and encamped near Adziatsberd, where he finds himself confronted and opposed by a notable coalition of Armenian nationalists, numbering 80,000. Yet once again the kings display their Romanising proclivities; and Ashot III. and his namesake the king of Vasparacan act as peacemakers, and end by lending him reinforcements. Alarmed at these preparations, the people of Bagdad loudly accuse the sloth of their rulers, and insist on urgent measures. We must elsewhere attempt to trace the political development of the caliphate and the causes which led to the seclusion of a Caliph-Mikado; here we must be

Zimisces and the Crusading Ideal; his eastern exploits and close relations with Armenian royalty.

[1] Or does Mleh stand for Melek or Malech, *Lord* or *chief Domestic*? Or, again, is it in any way connected with the later family of Melissenus?

Zimisces and the Crusading Ideal; his eastern exploits and close relations with Armenian royalty.

contented with noting the institution by Rahdi[1] (934–940) of the Emir-al-Omra's office, which some years before these events had centred all effective authority in this Shogun,—minister or generalissimo. But (as sometimes in Japan) the chief emir was himself an indolent man of pleasure; and public indignation had to summon, from the useless pastime of the chace, a delegate who had in turn delegated all serious business. Bokhtiar set himself to defend the capital and raise troops; he compelled the unfortunate Commander of the Faithful to sell his furniture for the purpose. But the Roman peril vanished like a summer cloud; while their armies wrought havoc up to Miafarekin, an imprudence of the mysterious *Domestic* Mleh exposed the weakness of their position and lost at once the advantages of the campaign. (Indeed, it is disheartening work for the student to trace the thousand-years' conflict on the Tigris and Euphrates, and to reflect that in that long period no serious change was effected in frontiers or influence, except in the middle of the seventh and the middle of the eleventh centuries.) In 974, Zimisces retaliated and reduced the caliph, or rather the emir, to the payment of tribute, which we find still paid twelve years later—even amidst the civil discord and insecurity which filled the early portion of Basil's reign. We notice, with amusement but without surprise, that the prudent emperor refuses to open negotiations on the reunion of the Churches, suggested by the ex-Patriarch Vahanic, on the ground that he had been canonically deposed by his own people. In 975, during the great and comprehensive expedition into Syria, Zimisces sent Ashot III., his old ally, a full narrative of his visit to Jerusalem, with a gift of 2000 slaves and 1000 horses, decorating at the same time two Armenian envoys with the titles "rabounapet" (rabboni) and philosopher in one case; and in the other, μάγιστρος

[1] Or by his immediate predecessor?

or *protospathaire:* so at least run the native accounts of an enterprise and a compliment otherwise unknown.[1]

Armenian actors and influence in rebellion of Sclerus (976).

§ 3. In the troublous year 976, after the death of Zimisces, the revolt of Sclerus takes on an entirely Armenian character. His headquarters were in Dchahan and Melitenè; there he was saluted emperor, and there he was joined by Armenian horsemen. The seat of government and the resources of the rebellion lay in Mesopotamia; and while 300 Arab cavaliers fought under his standards, the neighbouring emirs of Diarbekir, Amida, and Miafarekin cordially assisted the cause. Nor are the native Armenian princes behindhand; a brother Romanus and the two sons (Gregory and Bagrat) of Ashot, prince of Taron, were to be found amongst his allies. The rebel fleet was under the command of Manuel Curticius. The attitude of a certain David in this civil war is more doubtful; he is variously represented as a king of Iberia, or as a prince of Taïk and *Curopalat;* as an ally of the legitimate emperor, or as acting in concert with the pretender. One account tells us that, in exchange for his support, Basil II. promised to surrender all towns depending on the empire, in Hark (or Haïk?) and Apahouni provinces, and in the district of Mardal.

Displeasure of Basil and outbreak of religious persecution.

But whatever may have been the aid of this dubious ally, we cannot doubt that, on the whole, Basil had good reason to be displeased with the Armenian attitude during the rebellion. He was angry with the race and the Church; and he empowered the metropolitans of Sebastè and Melitenè to persecute the Eutychians. They fail in a design to seize the Patriarch Khatchic, but succeed so well in stirring up the bitterest feelings between the two nations that, in 977, St. Gregory of Narec loses all his popu-

[1] Schlumberger does full justice to these Oriental sources in his diffuse history of the time. But the shapeless and straggling plan of his meritorious labour of love makes the narrative very difficult reading to the eager student.

Displeasure of Basil and outbreak of religious persecution.

larity and is subject to insult, on the mere suspicion of a desire for reunion with the hated "Greeks." But the emperor was eminently placable, and has gained an undeserved renown for merciless cruelty by a single action during a Western campaign. Twelve years later (989) he accepts graciously the surrender of the four princes who had taken part with Sclerus. One last ember of sedition broke into flame in the revolt of George, μάγιστρος, in Taron, quickly overthrown by John, general of the Imperialists, on the plains of Bagarij. When Sclerus accepted from his generous rival the title of *Curopalat*, and retired into the dignified privacy which that title now entailed, Basil had no more competitors to fear. In this same year (989) we read of an isolated fact which raises our sympathy for the gallant Armenian struggle for freedom and worship, between the infidel and the still more suspected Greek. The emir of Akhlat (near Lake Van), governor of Hark and Apahouni (mentioned above as offered by Basil to an ally), once more elevates the defences of Manzikert, which Bardas Phocas had destroyed, captures Moush, and massacres the priests there; Asolik, our informant, having himself seen the gory traces on the church-wall. But the chief interest of Basil's reign and subsequent exploits is now finally transferred to the West; and we shall find Armenian characters figuring conspicuously either in actual records or in the romance of History.

Armenia suffers from the Moslem and is reconciled to Basil II.

Legend of Armenian origin of Samuel the Shishmanid.

§ 4. In 988 (here too we depend on Asolik) Basil compelled many Armenians to emigrate into Macedonia and settle there; an instance of that transplanting policy which the Byzantines for divers reasons so often adopted. Carrying into their new home the hostility and resentment which they had felt in the East, they lost no time in defaulting to the Bulgarians; and in the number of these defaulters were found Samuel and Manuel, two members of a

great Armenian family in Derdcham. When in the next year (989) Basil, accompanied by the Armenian annalist, went to the wars and captured Curt, the Bulgarian king, the following strange tale went round: that it was the Armenian Samuel who placed himself at the head of the despondent Bulgars, chased the imperial troops, accepted the title of king, and proposed peace on the terms of marriage with Basil's sister. Being deceived, like Jacob, by a lady-in-waiting, he swears undying hatred and commits the episcopal go-between of the mock marriage to the flames. It is difficult to say what element of truth lies embedded in this astounding myth; perhaps we may pardon the national conceit of a writer who sees a compatriot in every gallant foe of the powerful emperor, an Arsacid on every throne.

Legend of Armenian origin of Samuel the Shishmanid.

Yet Armenians are not wanting to the imperial cause; and several facts point to the noble confidence of Basil, and his ready acceptance of Armenian proffers of loyalty. He placed in command at Thessalonica Gregory the Taronite, a Greek patronymic for that family of princes who, having surrendered their territorial right between Taurus and Euphrates, were content to live as pensioners of the Roman court or captains in the Roman armies. Some members of the clan had followed Sclerus; but all were pardoned and taken into the confidence and intimate service of the emperor. Again, in his retinue on this occasion, Basil takes with him a Gregory μάγιστρος and his son Ashot, with Sahak, prince of Handzith. Meantime, in the East the mysterious David, prince of Taïk, had been enjoying great success against the various emirs; he had reconquered land in Vasparacan and Ararat. But this success aroused envy, and he was poisoned in the Eucharist—a rare instance in this history of treacherous or brutal crime so familiar in Western annals. He has time to make a will; bequeathing his little realm to the mighty empire, much as kings of Pergamus or Bithynia had

Armenian officers of Basil II. (990).

Taïk bequeathed to Rome; Basil II. removes religious disabilities.

done in earlier days. At this moment Basil was at Tarsus (991), and on the news flies northwards with his habitual impetuosity. Met on the way by the remonstrances of the Armenian clergy against the vexations of the Sebastene prelate, he at once annuls all their religious disabilities, and restored amongst other privileges the use of bells. At Erez, in the canton of Archamouni, he received the homage of the Emir of Neferkert, and, oddly enough, seems to have ordered his Armenian princely neighbours to lend him their support in case of need. We may believe that Basil saw in this nominal vassal of the imprisoned caliph a useful renegade for his own purposes; and it is clear, both for the Christian nobles and the Moslem governors, that independence could only be preserved by playing off one great power against the other.

The Great Durbar of 991; Basil II. receives fealty of Armenian kings.

§ 5. The Caucasian monarchs also came to pay their respects; Bagrat, king of the Abasgians (a minor royal dignity, held as apprenticeship by the Iberian heirs), and his father, Gourgenes, king of Iberia. Meeting Basil near Mount Hadjitch, they were decorated severally with the titles *curopalat* and *magistros;* and Gourgenes discovered later, to his chagrin, that he had enjoyed a vastly inferior dignity. Several Taïk princelets do homage, and the harmony is only broken by the quarrels of a Russian and a Georgian. On the charge of stolen fodder the whole Russian contingent make common cause against the purloiners, and defeat the Georgians after slaying their Taïk generals, John and Gabriel, sons of Otchopentir, and Tchortovanel, son of Abou-Harp (Abel-kharp ?). Abbas, king of Kars (the hero of the cathedral-dedication), renders fealty at the same time with Sennacherib, king of Vasparacan, and his brother Gourgenes, loaded with gifts. The absence of Gagic I., king of Ani, from this imperial durbar excited adverse comment; a nephew instils into Basil's ear suspicions of his uncle's motive, while the emperor

waits with increasing impatience at Bagrevad (in the province of Hark). Basil orders the district of Cogovit and Dzalcot to be ravaged. Some difficulty arose, too, out of the envious discontent of the Iberian king at his inferior title; he works havoc in Taïk, and, after recourse to arms, Basil finds it prudent to cede a portion of this district to Georgia at a convention agreed to at Mount Medzob. (This king, Gourgenes, left to his son, Bagrat, whose superior dignity had incensed him, the joint kingdoms of Abasgia and Iberia; and he dying ten years before Basil, in 1015, is followed by his son Georgi, heir to both crowns.) According to Arabian writers, Basil occupied at this time (before the close of the century) the towns of Akhlat, Malazkert, and Ardjich; and this famous expedition is followed in the East by a long peace and silence. It is not until 1016 that we resume the thread of Armenian history, interrupted for a quarter of a century. The scene of events is Vasparacan, where, since Phocas and Zimisces, a part had been incorporated into the empire, part being occupied by petty chieftains, allied or directly vassals, part still acknowledging an independent king, Sennacherib. Upon this little realm fell the brunt of the Seljukian invasion in its earliest attacks. Countless Turks invade and penetrate into the Reschdounian canton. Sapor (who would seem to have controlled the military resources of the country) marches to meet them. With him went the valiant youth David, son of the king; while the sovereign himself, charged with the civil and central government, watched anxiously from his capital at Van, or at Ostan. The Seljuks carried their ravages to Dovin and the canton of Nig, actually securing a portion of Vasparacan. Vasak of Betchni (father of Gregory, μάγιστρος by imperial favour, of whom we shall hear later) joins in defending the country, falls on the Turks besieging a church, and cuts their detachment to pieces, cleaving in two a very Goliath

The Great Durbar of 991; Basil II. receives fealty of Armenian kings.

Valiant resistance in Vasparacan to Seljuks.

Sennacherib of Vasparavan surrenders to the empire.

of stature at a single blow. In the very moment of victory, while he was uttering words of pious thankfulness, a stone ended his life, and he was venerated as a martyr in the cause of his religion and his country. His brother Varanes succeeds as generalissimo of independent Armenia; a post, like the Byzantine shogunate in the past century, sometimes equal in dignity, and generally greater in authority than the kingship itself. The Armenian troops more than held their own against the raiders, but Sennacherib, remembering a prophecy of Nerses about the fate of their country, convened the grandees, persuaded them to endorse his proposal of a surrender to Rome, and despatched his brave son David to the imperial capital. He was accompanied by the clan-bishop of the Reschdounians, who could from his own eye-witness testify to the havoc wrought by the Turk in his canton: three hundred horses laden with presents followed in the retinue. David, a prince after Basil's own heart, was welcomed with fatherly affection, and solemnly adopted by the childless monarch in St. Sophia; 1000 villages or hamlets, 11 fortresses, and 10 cities were transferred to the direct sway of Rome. Convents and their lands were only excepted; but many of their inmates, together with 400,000 of the people, followed the king into the safer territory of the empire. They rapidly build cities for their own use on the Euphrates, Akh, and Arabkur; while Sennacherib, made patrician, is given Cappadocia to govern as an imperial lieutenant, and receives an appanage very palpably feudal, in the city and surrounding district of Sebastè, for his own hereditary usufruct. We know that Basil distrusted the great Asiatic landlords who "joined field to field" and emulated the *latifundia* of an earlier age; he had removed Eustathius Maleïnus from his "more than civil" demesnes in 991, and part of the principality assigned to the ex-king may have comprised the estate of Maleïnus (which had at his

Feudal fiefs within the empire.

death reverted to the State). The new province was entrusted to Basil Argyrus (a brother of the future Emperor, Romanus III.); and on his estrangement from native sympathies, Nicephorus Comnenus was despatched to consolidate and to pacify. Sennacherib (according to Armenian accounts) showed his loyalty to Basil in a peculiar way, for it was he and not Xiphias who killed Nicephorus Phocas (last pretender of the famous clan) and sent his head to Basil (1021). *Feudal fiefs within the empire.*

§ 6. But the Far East gave the veteran emperor endless trouble: in 1022, he sets his face towards Iberia, and marches on Vanand (or Phorac). The whole country was up in arms against the Roman aggression; the Abasgians were in force, and all the neighbouring tribes of the Caucasian district joined the coalition. Basil after some anxiety wins a decisive engagement, and proceeds to ravage twelve cantons (according to Samuel of Ani, twenty-four). He winters in Marmand on the Euxine, and crosses thence into Chaldia. On September 11th a second battle was fought, in which Liparit, Abasgian general, was slain. George, the king, flies and sues for peace, which is granted by Basil in exchange for the cession of a large district and the surrender of a son as hostage. Basil treated this youth with the well-known kindness and whole-hearted confidence of Byzantine rulers; he was to him as a son, and received the now uncommon title, *magister militiæ* (στρατηλάτης). John, king of Ani, who had also been a moving spirit in the anti-Roman league, finding his allies surrendering, hurriedly made terms with the empire. Like Sennacherib, he proposed to give up Ani to Rome on condition of a life-interest reserved to himself, and an imperial promise to defend Armenia from the Turks. The Patriarch Peter, charged with the precious documents, the title-deeds of a kingdom, arrived at court. Basil treats him with great respect, enhanced by a miracle of which *Discontent and rebellion in Georgia (1022).* *Proposal to surrender Kingdom of Ani to Rome.*

Proposal to surrender Kingdom of Ani to Rome.

the emperor was witness. (There are references to an obscure campaign in Persia in 1022, in which Basil suffered some reverses, but gained the citadel of Ibrahim through the cleverness and loyalty of a native woman in that part of Armenia which was occupied by the Moslem.) It is uncertain if the deed of gift or donation of Ani was given up by Basil II. or by Constantine IX. during his brief reign (1025–28); nor is the transaction entirely clear. Cyriacus, chief of the Armenian patriarchal hospital, was sent, at the emperor's request, on a delicate mission; and in his hands was placed an important document which transferred a large district to the direct rule of Rome. This was to be delivered to the new King of Ani, John Sembat; was it to remind him of the precarious tenure, or to surrender the deed? Cyriac (Κύρακος) at any rate kept it, and appears to have delivered it over again to Michael IV., and the mild and conscientious prince waited till Sembat's demise to enter upon a legitimate possession. John Sembat of Ani, and his brother Ashot, king of Tachir, died about the same time, previous to 1039, probably in 1038. An interregnum, or rather anarchy, prevailed for two years. The nobles do not agree upon the choice of a successor; for Sembat was childless, and Gagic, his nephew, son of Ashot, was too young. Thus the boy of fourteen years had to wait until a loyal general put him in possession of his heritage two years later. In 1039 the bailiff of the king profited by political disorder to pillage the royal treasure-house, to entrench himself in a strong castle of his own, and to return in force to Ani, prepared to offer himself as a candidate for the vacant throne; his name was Sargis-Vestes[1] of Siounia (or Swania). Then at length Michael displays the letter, conveying Ani as a gift to the empire; and sends an

Curious delay in completing the transfer; varying accounts.

Anarchy and treason in Ani.

Michael IV., 1040, prepares to enforce the claim.

[1] It is possible that, in the profuse distribution of Byzantine court-titles, Vestes stands for βέστης, a somewhat obscure dignity, perhaps Master of the Imperial Wardrobe.

army to enforce the claim, reaching, according to the historian, the incredible number of 100,000. Meantime the military resources of independent Armenia, at least of Vasparacan, were under Varanes (or Bahram), a brother of that General Sapor who had met and defied the first Turkman onslaught. It is not easy to define his position exactly; he was certainly in some respects the peer of kings, and pursued a free policy of his own choice, as a strong nationalist. With an equally incredible force of 50,000 he falls on the negligent Roman troops, who had hitherto met with no resistance. The infuriated natives slay the Romans without quarter, in spite of the imploring appeals of their own more merciful general. Sargis had played a double part: he had betaken himself dutifully to the Roman camp, and, now that fortune had declared against them, he returned to the city and gave the best account he could of his absence.

Michael IV., 1040, prepares to enforce the claim.

Furious resistance of Bahram the Nationalist.

§ 7. But the chief Armenian throne was now open to the adventurer. Under Michael V. (1041), David Lackland, a Bagratid "king" in Albania, descends into Shirak (possibly at the instigation of Rome), to seize the vacant crown. Here again Varanes interposed, challenged his ambitious aim, and forced him to retire. Sargis-Vestes had not given up his pretensions, and Varanes guarded the rights of a scion of the royal house against these claimants. At length he succeeds in placing the youthful Gagic (or Cakig) on the throne, aged sixteen, destined to be the last independent sovereign. In this restoration Varanes was warmly assisted by his own nephew, Gregory μάγιστρος, lord of Betchni, in Ararat (who would seem to have received the title during a sojourn at Constantinople, and to have there written works in verse and prose in his native tongue; also to have converted a Moslem by the literary *tour de force* of embracing in a thousand distichs the history of the Old and New Testaments. He left behind him a

Bahram raises Gagic, last King of Ani (1042).

Bahram raises Gagic, last King of Ani (1042).

son, who was destined to become Prince or Duke of Antioch under the Romans). Gagic was a youth of excellent qualities, and fought with courage and success against the hordes of the Turkmans now returning to the charge. In 1042 (the limit of our present inquiries) they are found near Betchni, the residence of Gregory μάγιστρος; Gagic secures the victory by a clever ambuscade, and many are lured to death and drowned. They return soon after to the coveted soil of Vasparacan, and are confronted by Khatchic-Khoul the Lion (an Arzrounian prince), in the Canton of Thorounavan.

Straightforward dealing of the emperors.

It may not be out of place to give another instance of the good faith and feeling of the Byzantine sovereign, at a time when the title seems to modern ears to imply the hypocrite, the thief, and the assassin. David, the son of Sennacherib, Arzrounian "king" of Sebastè, died after ten years' reign. Here is an excellent example of the *official* turning into the *hereditary*, the transformation of a functionary holding a certain post at pleasure into a continuous feudal family seized of an appanage on condition of a trifling homage. Atom, his brother, succeeds, but is accused at court of treasonable intentions by an Armenian prince, jealous of their house. Michael IV., credulous and alarmed, sent troops, and a summons to appear before him. The royal brothers wisely decide to obey. At the tomb of the great emperor Basil they read out his deed of investiture with the sovereign principality of Sebastè, and protest their innocence of the charge. Michael at once believes them, embraces them with tenderness and remorse, and imprisons the calumniator.—The reign of the same prince was also signalised by the amazing vicissitudes of the little town and fortress of Bergri, on the borders of Lake Aghthamar near Ardjich. The governor, Khtric, was captured by the Roman governor in Vasparacan, Nicholas Cabasilas, who seized the town. He again recovers his liberty and his post, loses again to the

Armenian lords Gardzi and Tadjat, wins it back, celebrating his triumph with a horrible bath of gore, and yields at last to the empire.

Relations of the Armenian kingdom to the empire (c. 1042).

Leaving then independent Armenia in the hands of a generous and able prince, and united in loyalty by a common danger, we may perhaps establish the following conclusions. The native dynasty had emerged again out of trouble and conflict, and thanks to the services of Sapor, of Bahram, of Vasak, and of Gregory, had reasserted its rights. The claims of Rome, founded on an authentic document, had been overlooked, tacitly surrendered, or mildly enforced. The Turkish onset had largely contributed to the success of the loyalist or nationalist party ; Roman governors and native princes lived side by side in suspicious amity, in open hostility, and occasional alliance. One great armament had been launched in vain against Armenian autonomy; and time was preparing a last and final conflict in which the lesser power would vanish like Poland in thraldom to the empire, itself already approaching the term of its real sovereignty in Asia. We reserve for notice, under the important reign of Constantine X., the final conclusion; following, as it does, the familiar lines of those historical events, by which the independence of smaller states is wont to be extinguished.

Close connection of Iberia with empire under Romanus III. († 1034).

§ 8. There remains only to notice briefly some disconnected details in the general relations of Rome and Armenia, which serve to illustrate the time between Basil II. and the tenth Constantine. Romanus III. (of the notable family of Argyrus) was strongly Armenian in his sympathies; he married two nieces and perhaps a daughter to their princes. It may be suspected that his death arrested the development of friendly relations and a wise policy of conciliation. I do not attach weight to the supposed insult imposed on the Armenian reinforcement at the Black Mount, when

Close connection of Iberia with empire under Romanus III. († 1034).

during his ill-starred expedition of 1030, he enrolled them among his regular troops. The actual loss of the day was retrieved by Maniaces (himself of Eastern descent); though nothing could ever obliterate the personal disgrace and shame of the emperor, who, perhaps for a century, was the first to suffer defeat in the open field. Magniac was given command of the riparian cities and forts along the Euphrates, with a chief residence at Samosata and a roving commission. He seized Edessa, then occupied by a lieutenant of the emir of Miafarekin, and sent home an annual tribute of 50 lbs. of gold from the single city. He was soon transferred to the control of *Roman* Vasparacan, while Leo Lependrenus succeeded him in the Mesopotamian viceroyalty. The brother of Michael IV., the eunuch Constantine, was the next governor of Edessa, or at least appears in its defence, with the title of Domestic of the eastern troops. The technical successor to Lependrenus was an undoubted Armenian, born, it was said, of an Iberian mother, Varazvatch.—It would appear that the death of Romanus III. (1034) stirred the ill-feeling and suspicion of these Iberians. Romanus and Zoe had married a niece, daughter of Basil Argyrus, to Bagrat, son of George, king of Iberia and Abasgia; and it is said that Bagrat broke a long peace with the empire to avenge the murder of Romanus. This would seem to be (like the scandalous yet circumstantial story itself) very problematic: in 1036, the same monarch sent a reinforcement of 4000 men to David Lackland against the emir of Dovin. The tendency to appoint natives to the imperial commands in the East is evinced by the name Khatchic, a native governor under the empire for *Roman* Vasparacan, a post in which the official and the feudal element must have been very evenly balanced. We read of two sons, Hassan and Zinziluc, being despatched to offer gifts and homage

Armenian governors for the empire: Principality of Tarsus.

to the emperor Michael IV. During their absence the Turks kill father and brother, and they return with 5000 Romans to take vengeance. Quite in the spirit of mediæval chivalry, the murderers are challenged to single combat, and the right prevails in the province of Her. But the petty Armenian principalities or governorships have become increasingly insecure; the tide of Roman influence is fast ebbing in the east, or rather the Armenian nationality is being driven westwards. On Hassan's death, the emperor gave his son, Abel-Kharp, the principality of Tarsus, in Cilicia, with its dependencies, and thus paved the way for that romantic sequel to the Armenian monarchy in the country of St. Paul. Once more, under Romanus III. (1034), Alda, widow of George of Abasgia, had handed over a strong fortress to Rome, Anaquoph; and Demetrius, brother of the Bagrat above, who married the emperor's niece Helena, received the distinction of *magister militum*. Thus hither and thither flowed the stream of Romanising sympathy among the Armenians at this time.

Armenian governors for the empire: Principality of Tarsus.

KINGS OF IBERIA (or Georgia or *Karthli*) of the Bagratid line, established as fifth dynasty since 575 by Gouaram, *curopalat*:—

Adranasar (Aternerseh) II., 890. (Bagratid king of Georgia; a grandson of Ashot I., Bagratid king of Armenia; crowned by Sembat I.)
David II., son.
Gourgenes I., nephew of David.
Bagrat II., son of Gourgenes, the Fool.
Gourgenes II., son of Gourgenes, 998.
Bagrat III., son of Gourgenes, 1008.
Georgi I., son of Bagrat III., 1015.
Bagrat IV., son of George, who married niece of Romanus III., whose brother Demetrius received title *magister militum*, whose mother Alda received Roman garrison in Anaquoph. There follow: Georgi II., 1072; David III., 1089; Demetrius I., 1125.

The new line of Abasgian kings provides several members of

the Iberian Bagratids, though sovereigns are not invariably chosen from that family: in 915, there is a Gourgenes, grand prince of the Abasgians, nephew of David II. (above); his son Bagrat served, as it were, an apprenticeship in Abasgia for the more important crown of Iberia, which he obtained in 958, at the close of Constantine VII.'s reign. At that time Abasgia served, like Naples or Tuscany, as a stepping-stone to a higher dignity. But the barbarous names of Thothos and Ber (927 and 945) prove that the Abasgian chieftains were not always chosen of this stock.

KINGS OF ARMENIA (of the Bagratid line):—

Ashot (son of Vasak), created ruler of Armenia by Merwan II., last Ommiad Caliph, 748.
Sempad, 758.
Ashot, 781.
Sembat, Confessor, 820.
Ashot I. the Great (first independent ruler), 856.
Sembat I., Martyr, 890.
Ashot II. (*iron-arm*), 914.
(An Ashot not counted, nominee of Arabs, 921.)
Apas, 928.
Ashot III., the Pitiful, 952.
Sembat II., the Powerful, 977.
Gagic I. (**king of kings*), 989.
John Sembat III., 1020–1042.
Gagic II., 1042 (†1080).

DIVISION C

ANNEXATION, RIVALRY, AND ALLIANCE WITHOUT (1040–1120)

VIII

ARMENIA AND THE EMPIRE FROM CONSTANTINE X. TO THE ABDICATION OF MICHAEL VI. (1040–1057).

Voluntary cession of King of Ani (c. 1045).

§ 1. THE reign of Monomachus is perhaps the zenith of Byzantine influence and extension, and the first moment of rapid reaction and decline. The chief event in the Eastern world was the extinction of the Bagratid kingdom in Greater Armenia, and the annexation of a vast territory, which stretched the realm from the Danube (or even the Straits of Messina) to the Caspian Sea. In 1045, Michael Jasitas, Roman governor in Iberia, has small success against the recalcitrant Gagic, nephew of the deceased monarch; and Constantine X. does not scruple to request the aid of Aboulsewar, Arab emir of Dovin, against a Christian sovereign. The emir bargained to retain his conquests. Gagic was alarmed at this unholy alliance; and Sargis-Vestes, working on his fears, induced him to make peace with the mighty yet placable rulers, whose arms and allies were ubiquitous. At last the distressed king decides to repair to the well-known asylum; he binds his nobles of the Romanising party by terrible oaths not to surrender the city of Ani in his absence, and exacts from the emperor full and express safe-conduct and immunity. The treacherous faction at once despatched the keys of citadel and palace to

Voluntary cession of King of Ani (c. 1045).

Constantine; and to his credit he refused to accept the advantage. Meantime a notable Armenian peer set the example of capitulation; Gregory μάγιστρος, friend of the aged Basil II., versifier and paraphrast of Scripture, gave up his possessions in Ararat in exchange for land in Mesopotamia, and the coveted title of Duke (which now became the chief honour bestowed by the empire on its foreign adherents). Gagic hesitated no longer; and with the entrance of Jasitas into Ani the Bagratid kingdom comes to an end, leaving only the prince of Kars in complete but precarious autonomy, under the hereditary sway of the son of Abbas. Gagic is granted the now archaic title of *magister militum*, with a large fief in Cappadocia. The first dependent governor of Ani was Catacalon Catacecaumenus, the burnt (*cf.* Fabius Ambustus), a general of the Armenian military caste, who will bulk largely on the scene in the next twenty-five years. Catacalon at once suspected the patriarch Peter and his nephew Khatchic of very doubtful attachment to the new suzerain; he seizes them both. Constantine X., entirely faithful to the gracious and trusting policy of the later emperors towards alien princes and possible allies, received Peter at court, and (while compelled to acknowledge the fairness of his lieutenant's suspicions) gave him the high dignity of *Syncellus* to his own "Chalcedonian" patriarch. He orders the reinstatement of Khatchic in the see of Ani, and even dismisses Peter after three years from his honourable detention, at the request and with the personal surety of Gagic the ex-king, and the two princes or "kings" of Sebastè; thither the patriarch retired, to die in 1060.—The two following years (1046) witnessed more desultory conflicts in the farther East. Aboulsewar, the emir of Dovin, was discontented with the good faith of the "Greeks," and loudly bewailed the violation of the compact by which he was to

Exploits of Catacalon, Roman governor, against emir of Dovin.

retain whatever he won from Gagic. It is customary to believe implicitly such charges in the case of the decadent Byzantine monarchy, the "Lower" empire; in this case, we will only remark that Gagic had already detached the emir from his imperial ally and thus rendered the treaty void; and again, he had ceded his kingdom of his own free-will. Nicolas Cabasilas,[1] in command of the troops, despatched a large force, under Jasitas and an Alanian vassal of his own, which is badly defeated under the walls of Dovin. The two generals are at once recalled, and Catacalon transferred from Iberia; while, with the true Byzantine caution so often fatal to rapid and concerted action, the control of the army was entrusted to a Saracen eunuch, Constantine, in whose loyalty the emperor had every reason to confide; we are reminded of the influence of Samonas under Leo VI. But this strangely assorted pair of yoke-fellows, the bluff general and the emasculated renegade from Islam, acted throughout in perfect agreement. They close in on the emir's capital, carefully occupying all places of supply and commissariat. (The Armenian writers give Catacalon the name Telarkh or Teliarkh: is it possible that under this lurks concealed, the ironical title τέλειος ἄρχων, or τελειάρχης?) Aboulsewar retaliated (as was usual in these border forays) by carrying desolation up to the walls of the new Roman centre, Ani. He destroyed the churches, martyring the faithful priests and bishops; and amongst the number we find the name of Vahram, the aged Arsacid general and patriot, who had com-

Exploits of Catacalon, Roman governor, against emir of Dovin.

[1] We may perhaps suspect that the name Basil is not strictly of Greek origin, either at this time or earlier, when it is illustrated by the great Christian dogmatist. The Armenian form might be Vasel or Barshegh; the Greeks would force its Hellenic equivalent into some kind of intelligible form. In this spirit and intention, they make Γοργιώνης (alert mind) of Gourgenes, Συμβάτιος of Sembat, Παγκράτιος of Bagrat. In the West they attempted a derivation of Thiudat and Thiuds-reich, by words which reminded the hearer or reader of the gift of God (Θεὸς, δῶρον).

pleted his eightieth year. He still lives as a canonised saint in the grateful memories of his scattered countrymen.

The Seljuk advance: its significance in world-history.

§ 2. The year 1048 saw the beginning of the Seljukian wars, which destroyed in a few years the caliphate and the traditional form and territory of the Roman Empire, extended a Turkish conquest from the neighbourhood of Byzantium to Cashgar, vanished before the still more terrible onslaught of the Mongols, and gave birth in dying to the Ottoman supremacy. The founder of the line was a brave captain in Turkestan, very probably of Christian belief, who, in the disturbed and incoherent realm which we call the caliphate, retired affronted from a petty court, set up an independent authority, and died full of years and booty as a brigand chief or mercenary captain in Bokharia at the age of eighty. It is fitting to compare for a moment the fortunes of Rome and Islam. Both systems were anti-national, impersonal, democratic (or rather equalitarian), and therefore despotic. There were no gradations of authority, no distinct and balancing centres of influence; the Caliph and Cæsar were all or nothing; the popular delegation of power was plenary and (at first) irrevocable. Rome leant successfully on the nations who entered her pale; the provinces were summoned one by one to send their sons to the capital and revive its dwindling vigour. As in Rome, Spaniards and Africans, Syrians and Dacians had played their part in sustaining the empire which recognised no distinction of race, so in Islam we can trace the successive stages by which the real power passes from Arabia to Syria, Persia, and Khorasan; how the caliphs, recruiting their armies farther and farther from the seat of government and the home-country, became the victims and the slaves of the Turkish mercenaries whom they had invoked against their own subjects. In the widespread theocracy of Islam any believer might become, not

indeed Cæsar—the prophet's kin were sacred—but his tyrant or his assassin. The difference between the two parallel systems may be seen in the greater efficiency of the successors of Constantine, who are continually awoken from the slumbers of the puppet to become the active controllers, first ministers, and generals of the great commonwealth. Elsewhere, the members of a privileged house of sacred and immemorial descent sank into nonentities; but at Old and New Rome there are no Mikados, *rois fainéants*, or Abbassid caliphs. By the middle of the eleventh century, the original force of Islam had been exhausted; its noonday was long past. The three great movements which created our modern world were just happening: the Norman conquests of England and of Southern Italy,—the arrival of the Seljukids as militant exponents of the principles of Islam. It is at this time that the kingdoms of the ancient and the modern world fall into that shape and system which has lasted until the present day. For the Seljukids are the ancestors and pioneers of the Ottoman Turks.

The Seljuk advance: its significance in world-history.

§ 3. The first embroilment of these redoubtable foes with the imperial forces occurred in 1048, for a miserably inadequate cause. Stephen, governor of Vasparacan and son of Constantine Lichudes, a favourite minister of Constantine X., refused leave, like Edom of old, to Cutulmish, Togrul's cousin, to pass through while retiring before the Arabs of Diarbekir. The arrogant governor is defeated, captured, and sold as a slave; but the glowing reports of Cutulmish on the fertile province influence the greed of the Sultan (as we may now call the representative of the imprisoned caliph, in distinction from the official emirs of the Arabian system). Twenty thousand men under Assan are sent to reduce and ravage Vasparacan; for if Harun himself had no higher ambition than a successful slave-raid, it was not to be expected that these gross recruits

First pillage of Vasparacan.

First pillage of Vasparacan.

to Islam, perhaps Christian renegades, had any idea of political consolidation. The new governor was Aaron, son of Ladislas, Bulgarian king, and brother of Prusianus (the duellist); so strangely on the outskirts of her empire did Rome bring together the different nations, tongues, and creeds of the world. He sent to Catacalon for aid, who had during the rebellion of Tornicius been summoned to the defence of the emperor against the usurper, and afterwards transferred to his old post as governor of the Iberian frontier of Armenia. Local report assigns a creditable victory and successful ruse to Catacalon: the camp was deserted, and while it is rifled by the enemy the ambush falls on them, drowning them in the river Strauga (?) It must, however, be remarked that the incident and the plan bear a suspicious resemblance to the tactics of king Gagic; and that while the Byzantines know of *one* incursion of the Seljuks, the Armenians, with better chances of accurate knowledge, speak of *three*. But the further success of the Roman arms and perhaps a long reprieve for the Asiatic provinces of the empires, were hindered by the Byzantine safeguards of a divided military command, by a college of equal generals. Their unanimous voice was requisite for any joint action, and a single veto (as in a Polish Diet) could indefinitely postpone action at a crisis. Aaron the Bulgar wished to act on the defensive and await further imperial commands, when Togrul's brother, Ibrahim Inal, advanced against them with an enormous host of 100,000. Catacalon, merely a warrior and not a courtier, bluntly declared for an immediate attack. The emperor sent in reply a cautious direction to wait for the further reinforcements of the Iberian Liparit.—This ally or vassal or subject of Rome (we are approaching the feudal uncertainty of legal status) is an excellent type of a common class in these latter days of the Eastern empire. A trained warrior, and descending from a military

Division in the Roman councils; they wait for Liparit.

(Feudal character of Liparit.)

family, he stands, like Vasak or Bahram, a powerful general by the side of the throne, or on its steps, and often of more consequence than its occupant. Twenty-six years before (1022), his grandfather had died fighting against the empire with the Abasgians ; and under Bagrat, king of Northern Iberia, he was established there and enjoyed great influence. But the king insulted his wife, and was expelled by an exasperated husband. Seizing the throne like the Persian general Bahram of old (in a rare interruption of a strictly hereditary line), he sought to establish himself by the friendship of Rome. Constantine X. willingly accepted his proposal, and recognised the successful pretender ; but Bagrat escapes from his exile, passes to Trebizond, and secures the emperor's permission to visit Constantinople. There the legitimate sovereign complained of the countenance given to a rebel and usurper. And on this occasion, if on no other, the emperor acted a truly imperial part, as judicious arbiter of the quarrels of lesser men, such as Dante vainly portrayed to the turbulent West as the ideal of an earthly monarch. He mollified the two rivals, and prevailed with wonderful tact on Liparit to rest content with the life-enjoyment of the province of Meschia, acknowledging Bagrat as his sovereign.

(Feudal character of Liparit.)

§ 4. While the generals each in good faith proffered and upheld their different views, the forces of Liparit were slowly assembling and descending southwards, and Ibrahim, reaping a full advantage from the respite, attacked Arz-Roum (near the ancient Theodosiopolis), and burns and sacks an opulent town, where the number of victims of fire and sword was said to reach 140,000. Still Aaron believed that nothing could dispense from the letter of the imperial instructions ; and his veto paralysed the action of the Roman forces while Catacalon chafed at the delay. But the arrival of Liparit only brought a fresh obstacle. He came with 26,000 Georgians and

Defeat of Liparit; negotiations for peace with Rome.

Defeat of Liparit; negotiations for peace with Rome.

Armenians and 700 of his own immediate retainers and vassals; but he refused to fight on a Saturday. When the engagement does in the end take place, both Roman generals accounted for the detachment that confronted them, but Liparit was defeated and taken captive. The Sultan displayed an even greater generosity towards his fallen foe than Alp Arslan to Romanus Diogenes. He dismissed Liparit without ransom; and gave to the released prisoner for his own use the sum which the emperor had sent. Events seemed to point to a truce in the hostilities between the two powers; but the *Sherif*, sent to the Roman capital to discuss the terms of peace, made extravagant demands, required tribute from the empire (which was as yet insensible of its secret decay), and broke off negotiations on refusal. In consequence, Togrul resumed the war next year (1049) by an attack on Manzikert, some twenty years before the famous and fatal battle. (Earlier in the year he had appeared before Comium in Iberia, but was deterred by the news of a great Roman force which Constantine X. had collected. The defection of the emperor's Patzinak allies or recruits altered the whole complexion of affairs. Like the Slavonian mercenaries of Justinian II. they abandoned their forts with one consent, refused to go on a distant expedition to the rocks of Iberia, and swam the Bosphorus on their horses beneath the eyes of an amazed and perhaps affrighted capital.) The patrician Basil forces Togrul to retreat; and the great army collected at Cappadocian Cæsarea was free to turn its attention to Aboulsewar. The Roman arms and designs were crowned with complete success. The emir's territory was ravaged, the old treaty renewed, and a hostage was offered and accepted, in the person of his nephew Artasyras. But this concentration of troops on the Eastern frontier had left the capital exposed. The days of the great Justinian were recalled when, victor from

The Patzinaks create a diversion in Europe; eastern armies weakened.

Gades and the Straits of Hercules to Colchis and the Euphrates, he trembled in the palace before a raid of disorderly barbarians. Neither then nor now could the empire support more than one fully-equipped host; Belisarius had to leave his task in Persia to fly to Italy. In recent times a Russian scare had brought up Curcuas with all his men from their proper post; and we shall soon see how the revolt of Tornicius disorganised the military defences by a contemptible domestic sedition. The Roman armies had followed strange leaders of every nation under heaven; but never perhaps a combination so curious. At the head was a retired priest, Nicephorus, who had abandoned his orders to follow active military service; a Western bishop would have united the two professions of arms and prayer. Catacalon, not without a smile or a murmur, assumed a subaltern post; and Hervey the Norman (φραγγόπουλος) occupied a powerful but indeterminate position as ally or *condottiere:* here first we meet with a notable name among the foreigners, Russians, Germans, and English, who since the days of Basil and Constantine had formed no mean reinforcement to the decaying (or suspected) native armies. Successive defeats had broken the spirit of the soldiers. Nicephorus was routed; Catacalon was taken, still breathing, among the heaps of slain; like Liparit, he was tended by the foe, restored to health, and finally released, to act once more as the guardian of the empire, the veteran hero and spokesman of the military party, and the "king-maker" in the revolution of 1057. The Patzinaks were a third time victorious over the cowed and demoralised forces (1050); but by one of the rapid turns from peril to security, so familiar in Byzantine history, they were repressed and rendered harmless by the end of the next year.

The Patzinaks create a diversion in Europe; eastern armies weakened.

Strange trio of generals against Patzinaks (1050).

§ 5. Meantime, the court and advisers of the benevolent emperor were agitated by perpetual sus-

The courtiers charge Armenian Princes of Arkni with disloyalty.

picion of Armenian loyalty. Once more a charge was preferred (1051) against the vassal-princes, who lived so strangely in the midst of the uniform officialism of Rome, on the border-line between subject and ally. The province of Baghin, in Fourth Armenia, had long enjoyed peace under a college of amiable brethren residing at Arkni, Abel Harpic (or Aboul-Kharp), David, Leo, and Constantine. The emperor listened to their accusers, and sent Peros with a force to investigate. He summons all the lords to attend a durbar and publicly renew their profession of loyalty. Intending to abstain they were betrayed; and found it prudent to present themselves and tender allegiance. Of the guilty designs of the eldest brother Peros was reluctantly convinced; with unusual and almost unique severity in this age of tenderness to traitors and renegades, he set a price upon his head; but wept at the spectacle of accomplished justice. The remaining three princes he brought home with him,

Curious plot to annihilate Armenian 'Huguenots.'

to be banished into an island in the ensuing year (1052), not because their innocence was again doubtful, but by the kindness of the emperor. Our authorities at this juncture tell us that "a decision was taken at court to annihilate the entire Armenian race," and we are left in darkness as to the motive and scope of this curious proposal, which has found in our own times a parallel in the policy of Abdul Hamid II. The emperor (always the most clement man within his own dominions) saved them from the tempest; there was no Armenian Bartholomew, no Sicilian Vespers; and the gracious and capable sovereign, Theodora, sent them back to their own land, conferring the responsible control of their province to Melusianus.—But it is abundantly clear that

Normans posted in East owing to distrust.

the court-party and civil ministers entertained a profound distrust of the Armenian warrior-class. From certain vague intimations we might almost surmise that the great army of the East was no more. In 1052, we find Franks and Varangians dispersed in

various posts of Iberia and Chaldia, under Michael the Acolyth. He was successful in inducing Togrul to desist from his savage reprisals for the escape of his rebel brother Cutulmish. But in 1053, the Sultan again returns to Lake Van, round which in earliest and latest time alike clustered the homes of the true Armenian race. He captured Bergri and begins the *second* siege of Manzikert, still ruled by Basil the patrician (scion of a noble family of Taïk by a Georgian mother), a clear proof that the wisdom and justice of the emperor had arrested the fatal policy of eliminating the Armenian element from the service of Rome. The Turks had the usual successes of a ferocious and undisciplined horde. The districts of Ararat, Vanand, Khorsenè, Chaldia, and Taïk were ruthlessly ravaged. Thatoul, the general of Abbas, king of Kars, was put to death in captivity for having killed in battle a Seljuk prince. But the Sultan retired baffled from the walls and bastions of the citadel; an Armenian and a nameless but ingenious Frank diverted the force of his batteries and set fire to the engines which, stolen from the Romans, they employed with clumsy art against their inventors. After receiving in his camp from a catapult the gory head of a general who had counselled persistence in the siege, Togrul hesitated no longer. He strikes his camp and plunders the vulnerable portion of Arzké, a town in the Pesnounian district, and on the borders of Van. The not inglorious reign of Constantine X. was wearing to its close; two acts of imperial generosity must be recorded; Basil, for his meritorious defence, was created Duke (or Prince ?) of Edessa, and Catacalon, returning safe and whole from the kindly Patzinaks, received the still prouder title, Duke of Antioch, which had for a hundred years shed added lustre on the highest official rank.

Normans posted in East owing to distrust.

Attack of Togrul fiercely renewed (1053) but baffled.

Catacalon, Duke of Antioch.

§ 6. During the short reign of Theodora (1054–1056) decisive and significant movements took place in the East. On the one hand, the Seljuks

Fresh Seljuk attack; treason of the son of Liparit.

Fresh Seljuk attack; treason of the son of Liparit.

gathered courage, assaulted Ani (1055) by the united armies of Togrul and Aboulsewar, once more hostile to the empire; ravaging the district of Basen, massacring the whole populace of Ocom to the number of 30,000, scared or stupefied by the fires kindled by the savage foe. (Another band of mutineers, despising the commands of the Sultan but recognising the same prey, killed a Roman commandant Theodore, in the province of Taron.) On the other hand, we have a signal instance of that restless feudal spirit which excited the distrust of the ministers in the capital against the Armenian race, whether as vassal-princes or as troops enrolled in the imperial service. Ivan (or Ivané), the son of Liparit, the superstitious general who had failed against the Turk in 1048, had been gratified by the investiture of the provinces of Hachtéan and Archamouni: he had found this substantial recompense for the very doubtful services of his family inadequate to his own deserts. He coveted the addition of the province of Carin; and to secure his purpose, allied with the Turks. Terrified at his crime, he guides them into Chaldia, away from his own territory; and they are glutted with the rich booty of a defenceless country. This was the signal for a more determined and ferocious onslaught. Anarchy broke loose in the Asiatic provinces. A band seizes Erez, and massacres all its people.

Pillage of Chaldia.

Emir of Akhlat extinguishes revolt of Hervey the Norman.

Michael VI.'s reign was marked by the revolt of Hervey, an excellent instance of the dangers of mercenary aid, and the aversion of strong and youthful individuality to serve an impersonal cause. Neither Norman nor Armenian (amid many signal points of unlikeness) could appreciate a state, a commonwealth, or public welfare. All life was for them comprised in personal honour, in detached acts of prowess, and in allegiance to a personal chief. Hervey at least would have been contented if his vanity had been flattered by the title *magister militum*,

which he asked as the price of his services. The boon was refused with some scorn; and Alaric had sacked Rome to avenge a similar slight. Hervey was no historian, but the same Teutonic spirit, covetous of honour and careless of gain, worked in him as in his Gothic cousin six and a half centuries before. He dissembles his resentment and asks a furlough. He passes into Armenia, where he had an estate or a citadel; and communicates his discontent to the other Franks, who had been established there in military colonies to counteract the Armenian influence. The empire had reason to repent of its decision; the Norman mercenaries were less trustworthy and more dangerous than the Armenian natives. Like Russell some years later in the empire, like the Seljuks themselves in their early days, he became a brigand-chief, a robber-baron of the Western type, a captain of raceless and creedless *condottieri*. In Vasparacan, he does not scruple to court the alliance of Samukh, Togrul's general, and with his aid to harass the lands of the empire. But the infidel put small faith in these blonde barbarians; and Michael VI. owed to the prudence and friendliness of the Emir of Akhlat the easy extinction of the mutiny. Apolasar posed as the host and ally of Hervey's company, but it was against the wish of their leader that the Franks entered the city. They were all assassinated; and Hervey himself thrown into chains. The emir wrote to Michael VI. with almost dutiful glee at the deserved fate of the rebel; and the emperor, terrified at the renown of any successful general in his employ, must have been profoundly thankful that he was not required to provide the military class with a chance of distinction. But the emperor could not avert his fate. He was destined to fall before some member of the warrior-class, and it was the veteran general, Catacalon Catacecaumenus, who became the arbiter of the due moment of the insurrection and the qualifications of the new emperor.

Emir of Akhlat extinguishes revolt of Hervey the Norman.

IX

ARMENIA AND WESTERN ASIA FROM ISAAC I. TO THE RETIREMENT OF NICEPHORUS III. (1057–1081)

Catacalon and Armenian military faction again in power (1057).

§ 1. The forces of the East had recovered their influence, their numbers, and their prestige; or at least the great magnates knew where their disbanded soldiers were chafing in enforced inaction. The troops, gathered at Castamouni in Paphlagonia, joyfully proclaimed Isaac Comnenus, to whom the choice of Catacalon had pointed, on June 8, 1057. From this moment the conflict between the Pacifists and the military caste is continual and embittered, and ceases not until the accession of the second Comnenus, twenty-four years later, puts an end for ever to the civil tradition of Rome. Like any feudal prince of the West, summoned by his peers to a precarious throne, Isaac is well aware of the doubtful benefit of a military backing. The constitution had not yet lost its archaic and yet venerable lineaments; the wearer of the purple was not yet a pure military dictator, nor a feudal prince among his clansmen or his serfs. Michael VI. had dismissed with irony and studied insult the generals who had assembled to pay their Easter homage and receive the usual gifts and honours. Isaac was not so imprudent; but he took occasion to send his late allies far from the capital to reside on their own estates. Catacalon became *Curopalat*, but the office was perhaps, for the first time, divided between a brother, John Comnenus, and a subject. Henceforth, the emperor relies only on his kinsmen; a Comnenus is the power behind the throne even during the interval between the abdication of Isaac and the emergence of Alexius; and the nomination of a new emperor is the triumph of a feudal clan.

Armenian influence on Rome.

I have dwelt thus on the *political* aspect of the revolution of 1057, because it bears out the influence ascribed to the new feudal forces at work throughout

the empire, and especially in the East. Armenia had no doubt preserved her independence by means, rather than in spite, of her feudal turbulence. But she had done more; she had permeated the socialistic system and government of Rome with the spirit of a bellicose hierarchy: and the influence which destroyed the reality of the empire, while it kept alive its phantom for 500 years, came from the East and not from the West.—For our present purpose, we must now resume our inquiry into the sequel of the Turkish inroads and the Roman civil war. Blour, in Carin (which Ivan had coveted), submitted to terrible cruelties; Khorzenè and Andzitenè are ransacked; and the attention of the warrior-class was distracted from the needs of the State to their own real or imagined grievances (1057). In 1058, a Turkish force came against Melitenè and sacked and burnt according to their custom; but with a curious nemesis, the retreating raiders are snow-bound among the gorges of the Taurus for five months, while the scanty but resolute defenders hold the passes. The death of their general and the news of a Roman reinforcement threw the Turks into confusion near the village of Mormran; and, though during their retreat through Taron they burn Elnout's cathedral and belfry (built by Gregory μάγιστρος), *Thornic* the Mamigonian assembles the levies of Sassoun against them, rescues their prisoners, and sends them back in safety to Melitenè. So far at least the Turkish war is a mere record of havoc, slaughter, and burning; broken only by some instance of patriotic daring. There is no steady policy, no advance to any certain goal. The Seljuks harry and destroy but they do not annex, and seem at the very moment of signal triumph to repent suddenly of their aggression.

Armenian influence on Rome.

Desultory raids of Seljuks with varying success (1057–9).

§ 2. The estrangement of Armenia was assisted by theological hate. Constantine XI. Ducas had succeeded, and he summoned the Ani patriarch Khatchic (nephew of Peter) to appear in the capital

Religious and political dissensions of Armenia and the empire

Religious and political dissensions of Armenia and the empire.

(1059); he was retained in polite captivity for three years, importuned to accept the creed and rites of the Greek Church, and (if an odd report be worthy of credit) to supply the emperor with an annual tribute or subsidy. Application is made also to Atom and Abousahl, princes or "kings" of Sebastè (Sivas), and to Gagic, the king of Kars. But the suggested submission was intensely distasteful to the Armenian nation; nor did the behaviour of the "Greeks" serve to mollify these prejudices. Insults were meted out to the Armenians, on account of their religion; George coming from Ani to Antioch suffers the crowning and unpardonable indignity of a pulled beard. In revenge he asks aid of the Turks, and plunders twelve adjacent villages belonging to the empire; no doubt frightened, like the rest of his countrymen, at the success of his unnatural vengeance. Yet Constantine XI. himself trusted Armenian loyalty and valour; he appointed Khatchatour, a native of Ani, whom Zonaras calls Χατατούριος, Duke of Antioch in 1060. But nothing could heal the breach between the two nations; jealousy impeded the successes of the camp as well as the harmony of a common worship. When (also in 1060) the duke levied his men and marched out to meet Slar-Khorasan (a title, not a name, "General of Khorasan"), a Greek, envious of Armenian success, sounded a trumpet in the dead of night, and thus informed the Turks, encamped near Nchenic, of the approach of foes: the emperor punished the culprit with the extreme penalty. If the duke by this expedition saved Edessa, he did not escape calumny; whisperers were always ready to insinuate suspicions of Armenian intrigues. He is relieved of the high office and replaced by Vasak, son of Gregory μάγιστρος, the pious poetaster: the emperor afterwards (with the keen desire to be just, which we have learnt to expect in Byzantine sovereigns) compensated him with the command of the fort Andrioun. At a *second*

Armenian alliance with infidel and Seljuk advance.

siege of Edessa, bad feeling again broke out: 4000 Greeks leave the city and encamp beyond the river in comparative safety and complete uselessness; only a few Armenians, performing prodigies of valour, kept the bridge, and a Frank died bravely in the defence. Togrul follows this up by an order to three generals, including Samukh, to attack Sebastè. Atom, helpless and dismayed, retired with his brother to an impregnable fortress, Khavatanek, and witnesses or hears of the burning of his capital, the murder of his subjects. After eight days' wanton havoc and destruction, the Turks leave behind them a mere scene of ruin, and Atom, like all Armenian princes in distress, seeks the asylum of the Roman court. This blow carried the horrors into a part of the empire which had long enjoyed peace. In 1061, another trio of captains, including the nameless "General of Khorasan," were ordered to Baghin, where Arkni, the chief town, falls before their fury, only intermitted for a brief space out of respect for religion during a service in church. The "Frankish colt" and the Duke of Edessa were sent against them too late to save the town.

Armenian alliance with infidel and Seljuk advance.

Fall of the Principalities of Sivas and Arkni.

§ 3. Alp Arslan succeeded Togrul, or Ταγγρολίπιξ, in 1062, being the brother or the nephew (Abulpharagius) of his predecessor. Next year he invades and reduces Albania, forces David Lackland to give his daughter in marriage; and takes the province of Gougarkh and Dchavakh (dependent on Iberia), together with the town of Akhal-Kalaki, "the new city." With Arslan, the Seljukian sovereign ceases to be a captain of brigands and raiders, and assumes the generous air and serious policy of a more civilised ruler. In 1064 he attacks the favourite and coveted citadel of Ani (with its lofty ramparts of Sembat II., and its circumfluent river, the Akhourian). This town had been in Roman hands since 1045; but was still entrusted to the care of native Armenians as lieutenants and officers of the

Serious aggressive policy of new Sultan (1062).

Capture and sack of old Armenian capital, Ani.

Capture and sack of old Armenian capital, Ani.

empire. Bagrat was in chief command as duke; and Gregory, a Georgian, held a subordinate post. Here again the Sultan was disappointed, and preparing to retire, was unhappily brought back by the news that the inhabitants were leaving the city, in the very moment when their safety was assured, the host of fugitives amounting to 50,000. Arslan returns and sacks (June 6, 1064). Part of the citizens were sent home as slaves, part set to rebuild the shattered walls and houses. With a strange population transplanted into it, Ani soon recovered from its ruins; for the Sultan had something more than a destructive aim. The king of Kars, sole surviving independent State now left between the old monarchies and the new barbarian inroad, averted the impending storm by wearing mourning, as if for Togrul; and the generous Arslan accepted without suspicion this hypocritical compliment. But the king followed the precedent so often set by Armenian princes; he handed over his land to Rome, by secret compact rather than open agreement, and was promised in exchange a fertile district and one hundred villages, near the Pontic towns of Amasea, Comana, and Larissa. But the trusted and venerable asylum of the oppressed would very soon be unable to protect the refugee. The eastern peril pressed gradually westwards. While jealousy at home starved the Roman armies, the Turkish troops under Samukh and the Slar-Khorasan had laid waste Iberia, Mesopotamia, Chaldia, and Melitenè; from the Euphrates northward to the Caucasus spread a scene of uniform desolation. Greater Armenia and Vasparacan are now to experience the horrors of this destructive war. Roman influence ebbs in Ani; and the natural defenders had lost their spirit in servitude (as they supposed) to a foreign power. The emperor gave liberty to the Patriarch Khatchic, at the prayers of the refugee princes of Sivas; but he survived but a short time,

Secret cession of last independent state to Rome.

Further range of Seljuks unhindered.

and died at Cucusa in this year (1064). Would there be a new patriarch, it was anxiously asked? At last, through the good offices of the Empress Eudocia and Abbas, prince in (or of) Amasea, permission was extorted from Constantine XI., or rather his Greek orthodox advisers; a son of the μάγιστρος Vahram was chosen under the title of Gregory II. In 1066 a Turkish army ravages the district near the Black Mountain, on the confines of Asia Minor and the modern province of Caramania: while another column penetrates to the province of Telkhoun, and plunders the district of the confluence of Euphrates and Melas.

Further range of Seljuks unhindered.

§ 4. The short regency of Eudocia (1067) was scandalised by another proof of the ill-feeling between the "two nations." At Melitenè a Roman force was stationed in the garrison, and another detachment (perhaps the more important) on the opposite bank; the latter refused to cross to the aid of the town. The inhabitants, deserted by their allies, bear the brunt and the town is taken. Arslan advances without check to Cæsarea, pillaging along his route, and despoiling the shrine of St. Basil in his metropolis. He returned by Cilicia and Aleppo, guided by a Roman renegade. Amerticius, claiming descent (like most ambitious men in the East) from the old line of Persian kings, had served the empire under Michael VI.; accused to Constantine XI. of some crime, he had been punished with exile, but, his innocence soon established, he had been taken back into fullest confidence and sent against the Turks. But the disastrous policy of the *civilian* ministers of war transformed a loyal servant into a foe: he became desperate owing to the default of pay, subsidies, and commissariat, and was glad to conduct the Turks to the ready plunder of a country which for the past hundred years had been singularly free from ravage. The Roman cause was undermined, as we see, by national and religious animosities; but its

Armenian disaffection; treason of the captain Amerticius.

Evil effects of civilian parsimony.

armies, still capable and brave, were honeycombed by discontent. Nicephorus Botaneiates, the future emperor (1078–1081), commanded a considerable force in Northern Syria; but his men disband in tumult like the soldiers under Tiberius and Maurice; and the new levies in Antioch, without cavalry, arms, uniform, or rations, soon follow their example.

It was impossible for the blind to mistake the signs of the times. Under a series of princes full of good intentions and generous impulses, but imperfectly informed and unduly influenced, the civilian and military duel was being fought to a finish. The inner history of this movement belongs to that parallel and complementary section, which narrates the shifting of authority under the nominal autocracy of the Cæsars. But the Eastern annals of these last fifty years betray unmistakably the outward symptoms of the disorder. To the short-sighted civilians this real Eastern danger lay in independent commands, such as had been confidently bestowed on Curcuas, on Phocas, or on Catacalon: the Turkish inroads, by the side of this formidable domestic menace, sank into mere border-forays, and the submission of the Armenian princes (which should have aroused the deepest anxiety) flattered the ignorant pride of the pacific and luxurious courtiers. The choice of Eudocia may well have been dictated by a nobler purpose than mere sentimental attraction. Against the advice and the perpetual intrigues of the palace and nobility, Romanus Diogenes was elevated to the throne as colleague of the young heirs and husband of the empress. The last military regent of Rome now appears on the scene, the son of a rebel and a pretender, and the most tragic figure in later Roman history, the Regulus of the empire.

No adequate Imperial forces on Eastern frontier.

Lukewarm support extended to R. IV.

§ 5. The campaigns of Romanus IV. belong to plain historical narrative; and it is idle to speculate on the possible results of the loyal and consistent

support of his lieutenants and of the court. His difficulties belong to the domain of political intrigue, which is elsewhere explored; and all that here concerns us is the inquiry into the general issue of the war. Its failure was by no means a foregone conclusion. The war-party and the upholders of "peace at any price" were no doubt evenly divided; and had the Byzantine empire enjoyed the blessings of universal suffrage and "popular" control, there is no reason to believe that the consequences would have been different. The civilians honestly took up much the same attitude as the opponents of the Boer war in England: and both (if mistaken) were sincerely convinced of the evils of imperialism and a military ascendancy. (In the actual conduct of the campaign we note the same strange anomaly as in Heraclius' Persian war. When in the second year (1069) Romanus proposed to advance to *Akhlat*, on Lake Van, the Turks were deciding to ignore his inroad and attack Iconium.) In 1068 we see that Romanus leaves an Iberian Pharasmanes in command of Hierapolis; and in 1070 the generals include Manuel Comnenus (a *curopalat* on his father's death), Nicephorus, of the illustrious family of Melissenus, and Michael the Taronite, of the old princely house so long domiciled in Constantinople. He performed a notable feat in bringing his captor to the Roman court (*captus ferum victorem cepit*), a hideous dwarf, boasting the ancient Persian dynasty among his ancestors, like all who claimed or attained high position in this age. It is possible that the favour shown to this renegade exasperated Arslan. In 1071 he collects all his forces, seizes Manzikert, and lays ineffectual siege to Edessa and Aleppo; at least the empire had not forgotten the arts of defence with which her valour has been so often reproached by the historians of the closet. Romanus was at Sebastè (or Sivas), where once more the misunderstandings of court and Armenians broke out.

Lukewarm support extended to R. IV.

His campaigns and Armenian officers; suspicion of Sivas princes.

Catastrophe of Manzikert (1071).

Catastrophe of Manzikert (1071).

The princes, Atom and Abousahl, of this feudal appanage or vassal principality, received him with respect; but the familiar charge of disloyalty being preferred, the emperor believes it and treats the town as a foreign conquest, refusing the title "king" which soothed the vanity of the exiles. Advancing to Manzikert he recovered it and put all Turks to the sword; and in his train we note the Armenian captains, Nicephorus Basilacius and Kbapat. The great battle of Manzikert follows, the capture and release of the emperor, the vindictive measure of the "political" party under the Cæsar John, the removal of Eudocia, the disastrous civil war, and the final defeat of Romanus at Amasea. Once more, as under the emperor Phocas, can an eastern monarch plead a righteous vengeance for his wars. Henceforward the Turkish Sultan might urge an honourable motive, the requital of Romanus' death. There is no reason to distrust the sincerity of his intent; and it is clear that the sultan had been deeply impressed by the fortitude of his gallant foe.

Scanty results of Manzikert (1071).

§ 6. But even while we recognise this change from a brutal raid to a solemn punishment of guilt, it is impossible to submit these ancient campaigns to any rules of modern warfare. It is difficult to understand what took place in Arslan's councils or camp during the earlier years of Michael VII. But little capital was made out of the victory of Manzikert, at least by the central authority; the sultan seemed content to denounce the murderers. The emigration of Armenian princes westward still continues, and we are left in astonishment at finding that Cilicia is still considered a safe asylum. In 1072 we find once more a close connection of the exiled nationality with Cilicia. In this year Abel-Kharp, grandson of Khatchic (who called for our notice in 1048), became a friend of the gentle and studious emperor who so fitly represented the civil party. Michael gave the prince command in Tarsus and Mamistria;

he raises the fortification, and prepares to dwell in the strong fortress of Paperôn, like any feudal noble in the West. The province becomes by degrees Armenianised; and there is a steady influx of the race. His daughter is married to a younger son of Gagic. Soon after, Ochin ("chased by the Turks," according to Samuel of Ani) obeys the invariable rule; he cedes his lands to the empire (which was perhaps almost helpless to defend them), and, joining Abel in Cilicia, receives from him (with the imperial sanction) the fort of Lambrôn (in the extreme west of the ancient province), where he too exercises wisely a petty feudal sovereignty.—Meantime Ani, now definitely in Turkish hands, is placed under Emir Phatloun, an aged warrior who soon resigned in favour of a grandson. This government must have been as mild and tolerant as the earlier rule of the Arabs in the countries they so rapidly annexed. Gagic, the ex-king of Ani, tried to rewin his crown when in 1073 Malek Shah succeeded to Alp Arslan: but among the Armenian princes he finds no sort of sympathy; and we may wonder whether this indifference was due to lack of patriotism, to a genuine contentment with the control of Phatloun, or to dislike for the character of their late sovereign (about whom a curious story is told of cruelty to a bishop, set to fight in a pit with his own dog).—The record of the next few years is unexpectedly scanty and interrupted. The Romans seem to have had an unfortunate respite for the growth of rebellion, which diverted their thoughts from the defensive measures so urgently needed. Michael VII. seems to have reigned in 1074 over a territory which nominally touched the Danube and the Euphrates, and included an effective control over Asia Minor. The merchant grandees of Amasea were emboldened to refuse subsidies to Alexius Comnenus, the future emperor; the rising of Oursel or Russel could be repressed without causing undue alarm; and the

Michael VII. still receives cession of land and awards principalities.

Ani, content with Seljuk rule, refuses to restore royalty.

The interval used by Rome for domestic sedition.

The interval used by Rome for domestic sedition.

military party must have been slowly recovering strength and prestige for the dignified "*pronunciamentos*" of Bryennius and Botaneiates. In the last year of Michael VII. (1077) we read with surprise of an imperial army quartered at Nisibis, Amida, and Edessa, and find that it sustained a defeat at the hands of the Turk, General Gomechtikin: our astonishment reaches a climax when we discover (1078) Soliman, another Turk, acting in concert with the imperialists against the rebel Botaneiates. But the star of Nicephorus was in the ascendant. He mounted the throne with the approval of the more energetic section; and the seventh Michael, like three of his predecessors, the first, the fifth, and the sixth of the name, retired from the palace, to become the non-resident Archbishop of Ephesus.

Triumph of the Military faction over House of Ducas (1078).

Revolt of Armenian Basilacius in Macedon.

§ 7. The last Armenian pretender within the limits of our period now claims our attention; also a Nicephorus, and surnamed Basilacius (or Vasilatzes). The scene of the fruitless revolt was Macedonia; engagements took place near the Strymon and the Axius rivers, and the decisive blow that ended the sedition came from the mace of *Curticius* (called a Macedonian, but of obvious Armenian descent), who killed Manuel, nephew and chief lieutenant of the pretender. Five centuries and a quarter had elapsed since the first conspiracy of Artabanus against Justinian.—Two or three incidents in Armenian history seem to show (1) how poorly the Seljukids had followed up the victory of Manzikert and the political dissensions of the Romans; (2) how Turkish influence or example had corrupted the manners of the Armenians. About 1077, a generation of Turkish atrocities might appear to have prompted or excused the murder of Khatchatour, once Duke of Antioch, now commander of Andrioun.[1] When he fell ill, a Greek monk stifled

Revolutions at Antioch; seizure by Armenian Philaret.

[1] Is this Andrioun the *Adrinople* of an earlier Armenian revolt? Rebellions of Armenian pretenders are not uncommon in the Macedonian or Thracian colonies (Nicephorus Basilacius, Tornicius, Basil the "Mace-

him with a mattress. The faithful troops avenge their master by throwing the assassin from the top of a lofty tower. At the same time Antioch became jealous of the renown of its Armenian Duke, Vasak; he is stabbed in the street under cover of offering a petition; the soldiers appeal to Philaretus, a character and a type that deserves some notice. He came from Varajnouni in Vasparacan, and, after the death of Romanus IV. (1071), aimed at the creation of a small independent state. With 20,000 men devoted to his cause he ousts the "Greek" garrisons in several towns, encamps before Marach, and begs Thornic (Tornicius) the Mamigonian, a prince of Taron and Sassoun, to join him in recovering Armenian autonomy. Thornic, like all the Taronites loyal to Rome, not only refuses but prepares to thwart Philaret's ambitious schemes. But the latter, indifferent as to the creed of his allies, invokes Turkish help, overthrows his rival, and makes a drinking goblet of his skull: it is long since we have to chronicle such an act of barbarity in the mild annals of Byzantium, and for the peculiar form of this savage exultation we must go back to the Lombards in the middle of the sixth, to the Bulgarians in the beginning of the ninth century. The rest of the body was sent to the prince or emir of Nepherkert, a personal enemy of the dead man. In such a society we cannot wonder that every attempt to rebuild a national kingdom should fail. Philaret, long independent with his Armenian troops, and seemingly undisturbed by the Turks, secured his reconciliation with the empire by meting out punishment to the murderers of Vasak; the indulgent emperor gave him a complete amnesty and the reversion of the Duchy of Antioch (*c.* 1078).—In 1080, the third Armenian Bagratid dynasty came to an

Revolutions at Antioch; seizure by Armenian Philaret.

Events in Armenian kingdom of Cilicia.

donian," Samuel, King of Bulgaria and Armenian Colonist (!)); but it is not possible to locate the rebellion of Sapor, 667, in Europe, and Andrioun may well have been altered to the better-known name (*cf.* pp. 380, 452).

Events in Armenian kingdom of Cilicia.

end, extinguished in the person of Gagic. This ex-king, unsuccessful in his hopes of recovering his sceptre, went down into Cilicia (almost repeopled with Armenian settlers), and demanded the surrender of his young son David at Fort Paperôn, son-in-law, and perhaps hostage or prisoner, of Abel-Kharp. Having received his son he disbands his followers, and, wandering with a small retinue, is murdered by obscure treachery. Both David and Abel follow him to the grave; and the Paperôn principality falls to Sahak or Isaac, son-in-law of Ochin, who by the cession of Abel had (as we saw) received in fee the castle of Lambrôn. Fortune was severe at the time on the scions of Bagratid royalty. John, Gagic's eldest son and David's brother, after marrying the daughter of the Duke of Ani (?), fled to Iberia, thence yielding to an irresistible attraction to the Roman court with his son Ashot. From the Emir of Gandzac, by a somewhat discreditable covenant, Ashot (leaving his party) secured the government of Ani as a subject, where his family had so long ruled in independence. He was poisoned by the clan of Manoutché;—so ran the tale of crime and violence in the East during a short period of five years.

Disappearance of natives in Armenia.

§ 8. There now remained but three scions of the house of Bagrat—Gagic, the son of Abbas, and the two princes of Sebastè, who seem to have outlived their contemporaries, the jealousy of their countrymen and peers, and the suspicion of the Roman ministers. From this year (1080) may be dated the disappearance of the Armenian race in its native land. A tiny principality, Parisos in Onti, struggled in vain to preserve its freedom, and soon vanished. Religion fell into decay; and the Armenian Church was nobly distinguished by its apostolical poverty, its uncompromising but ignorant loyalty to its creed and traditions. The remnants of the once powerful race escaped into Cilicia, and founded there the last and most romantic monarchy in Armenian history.

Reuben, a companion of Gagic, betook himself on this king's murder to a canton peopled by his race —Constantine, a son, was with him. He seized the forts Cositar (or Conitar, in south of *Ani*) and Bardzerberd; then penetrating the inaccessible Taurus, and joined by Armenian refugees, he established himself as king. Basil the Robber possessed a separate realm at Kesoun, near Marāch (or Germanicea): while the several authorities seem to have acted in concert against the common foe and to have maintained to the end an indefinite kind of vassalage to the empire. But Reuben could not carry the patriarchate with him. Ani was still the centre of Armenian native tradition: and Barsegh (Barsel or Basil), already bishop, is elevated to the supreme title (but, as we shall see, he will not rule without a rival over an undivided Church till some years later). The consecration of the patriarch took place at Haghpat in 1082, and Stephen, Albanian patriarch of Gandzac, performed the ceremony at the request of Manoutché, governor of Ani (after young Ashot's untimely death), and Gorigos, king of Albania, from his capital Lori.

Foundation of independent kingdom of Cilicia.

The Patriarchal Sees.

§ 9. We have just overstepped the boundaries of the period marked out, but it is needful to advance even further into the unknown domain lying beyond. We shall trace the fortunes of the Armenians in the next section during the reign of Alexius, 1081–1118; for it is impossible to leave the actors in the drama without inquiring into their later fate. Let us, at the strict limit of our appointed task, resume the state of the empire and its dependants up to the success of the Comnenian clan. In the ten years between Romanus and Nicephorus, Asia Minor was overrun by roving and predatory bands of Turks. Destiny, or the motion of the globe, forced a constant stream of immigrants westwards, spoilers and refugees alike; just as six hundred years before the integrity of the Occidental empire had crumbled

Western migration of Oriental Christians.

Western migration of Oriental Christians.

Asia Minor overrun.

Cilicia an outpost of Armenian nationality and Imperial tradition.

before the steady inrush of Northern barbarians. Central Asia stood now to the Roman Empire as Scandinavia, Denmark, and Germany to the realm of Honorius or Valentinian III. Armenia had pressed westwards and yielded only to the irresistible momentum of the Turkish tribes. While Antioch still remained an imperial fief or duchy, with its broad territory carefully defined as in Boëmund's treaty of investiture, Smyrna, Ephesus, Laodicea—in a word, the Seven Churches of the Revelation—and the western coast-line fell into Turkish hands. Certain strongholds, like Pergamus and Philadelphia, may at times be found tenanted by a Roman garrison; but the population that filtered in to occupy the wild sheep-runs and vast feudal solitudes was Turk or Turkoman, rightly claiming or usurping affinity with the great Mongolian family. Meantime, as with the empire of Attila (*c.* 450) or with the later Mongol horde (1200), nothing gave cohesion to the new Seljuk power, and every emir fought for himself. The central authority betrays all the well-known traits of barbarity in the first onset, followed by tolerance and clemency toward conquered peoples and their rulers. Armenia proper was not discontented with the government of Malek Shah; but the irreconcilable patriots fled with Reuben or with Basil, and repeopled a territory where the inhabitants had been often shifted since the days of St. Paul. The emperor was not without power in these distant and outlying parts; while (like Justinian or Phocas) he watched with alarm the manœuvres of barbarian squadrons within sight of his own capital. Armenia preserved a measure of independence under a suzerain who had not yet learned how to administer. The new kingdom enjoyed a prosperous development; and the captains and pretenders of the empire, those who defended and those who sought to destroy, will be found still to belong to the constant rival of the Greek nationality and religion.

X

ARMENIANS UNDER THE EMPIRE AND IN CILICIA DURING THE REIGN OF ALEXIUS I. (1080–1120)

Anomalous position of Empire under Comnenians.

§ 1. It is impossible to take leave summarily of the race whose firm native characteristics impressed the empire with their own ineffaceable stamp, more than half replaced the population, and enabled the great feudal revival of the Comneni and Palæologi to continue the "Roman" sway for nearly half a millennium. And as the sequel shows the significance of events, as later exponents of a philosophical school the latent drift of the early masters, so we can understand the period already surveyed by the light thrown back upon it by the ensuing years.— The elevation of the Comnenian clan meant the triumph of a vigorous policy and the feudal aristocracy; the dream of the "pacifists" was over. The army, and indeed the whole military system, had to be reorganised: the sovereign has to learn once more to fight in person, and display not merely the strategy of a captain but the valour of a knight. It is difficult to realise the Asiatic situation. Turks appeared in sight of the city, and their earliest capital was Nice, within the hundredth milestone; they manœuvred on Damalis and ravaged Bithynia. Yet Alexius defeats them, chases to Nicomedia, graciously accords peace, exacts the promise not to pass beyond the Dracon, and makes use of Turkish reinforcements, which the Sultan is glad to provide.

Fluctuating success of Seljuks in Asia Minor.

In spite of this early success which gave hopes of the recovery of the great wrong, the Turks, giving their name by 1085 to the whole country (Τουρκία, instead of Ῥωμανία), have made Asia Minor a heap of ruins, and the inhabitants are carried off wholesale as slaves or settlers beyond Oxus and Jaxartes. In their hands lay the once fertile pro-

Fluctuating success of Seljuks in Asia Minor,

vinces of Pontus (with some reservation), Paphlagonia, Bithynia (south of Nice), Ionia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, Lycaonia, Isauria, a portion of Cilicia, and the Pamphylian coast to Satalia. The conquests of Soliman (Suleiman), first Sultan, or perhaps viceroy of Rûm,[1] were confirmed by the sanction and recognition of Malek Shah, head of the conquering clan, and by the treachery of Philaret, Duke

[1] A few words on the Seljukian kingdoms may not here be out of place: as in later Mongolian empires a certain family bore unquestioned sway; the law of succession was uncertain; brotherly feuds frequent; local emirs apt to assert independence; and the various centres of the hereditary branches constantly at feud. The term "Sultan" may be said to apply to the princes of the blood, while Emir implies a mere lieutenancy, often in practice independent. There was the Great Sultan in Irak and Khorasan, like Kublai in Cambaluc in later times (the last representative being Sinjar, †1157); but Aleppo and Damascus (as well as Nice and Iconium) were seats of petty sovereignties in the family of Seljuk. The Sultan of Aleppo was a son of Toutoush, and the other city was occupied by his cadet. This constant subdivision and the resulting jealousy rendered joint action impossible, and gave the empire respite from the fate which only came with the Ottoman Turks.—As for the dominion of Rûm, it achieved its zenith in its early years under Soliman, after the conquest of Antioch had relieved it of a constant source of anxiety in the rear. When in 1097 Nice surrendered, and the capital was transferred to Iconium, the Romans recovered a large district inland and many walled towns; Turkish emirs, in vague allegiance to the Seljuk prince, were expelled from Smyrna, Ephesus, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Lampes, Polybotus: so overpowering had been the early inroad, so disastrous the effects of Melissenus' insurrection. When Arslan (1092–1106) fell back on the north-east of Asia Minor, he counted on the faithful help of the emirs in that region. But the Danishmand (from Tailu the "Schoolmaster") effectually hindered his plans. These had probably entered the district of Sivas soon after the death or defeat of Romanus IV.: on Soliman's death (imitating Aboul Cassim) they had seized Sivas, Tokat, Nicsar, Ablastan, Castamouni, and Malatiyah (the ancient seat of the bitterest foe of the Romans). This rebel viceroyalty formed an effective counterpoise to the adjoining legitimate dynasty of Rûm, and was of valuable help to the Roman revival: not until the extinction of the Danishmand (1175), after a century of power, did Iconium become the residence of a free and dangerous monarch. "Saisan" is unknown to Orientalists; he is Khahan Shah set free by the Grand Sultan Mohammed, murdered towards the close of Alexius' reign after his treaty with the empire, and succeeded by Masoud, who enjoyed or regretted his long reign of nearly forty years (1155). The Danishmand were reduced by his son, Kilig Arslan II., in 1175.

of Antioch, the Armenian of many parts. We have spoken of the anomaly, by which Antioch and its environs remained loyal and imperial, while Ephesus and Nice belonged to the enemy. This possession kept the nearer Turks in check by a perpetual menace in their rear. Whatever raids changed the aspect of the continent to ruin, while the Romans held part of Armenia, Trebizond, Cilicia, and Cœle-Syria, the Seljukian kingdom formed an *enclave* shut off from the central frame of their empire. In 1083 Basil (Barshegh), an Armenian, governor of Edessa, was replaced by an illustrious compatriot, Sembat, who at once excited the rage and hatred of the citizens. Philaret fished in troubled waters: he advances to Edessa, seizes Sembat and certain other native princes, carries them to Marach (Germanicea), and blinds them there; while he makes his own son, Barsames, governor. He soon allies with Soliman against his father, and takes Antioch (1084). Philaret escapes to Honi in Dchahan, but expelled by Emir Poltadji, returns to Marach: and to console himself in a mean retreat he consecrates a fourth Armenian patriarch for this new ducal residence. (Some accounts give as the reason for the unfilial treachery, the horror which Barsam felt at his father's apostasy to Islam; but his own alliance with Soliman is beyond doubt, and it was a lieutenant of the Sultan, Aboul-Cassim, who occupied Antioch.) Sinope was also seized about this time: and the further advance of Soliman was abruptly stopped by the jealousy of his kinsmen.

severed from East by Roman territory.

Strange exploits of Philaret, Duke of Antioch.

§ 2. Fraternal feuds and the independence of the emirate, out of sight of central control, made the consolidation of the Seljuk empire impossible. The Emir of Aleppo and Mosul claimed from a prince of the blood the same tribute that guilty Philaret had paid; and, met with arms instead of compliance, had invoked the aid of Toutoush, the Great Sultan's brother. He, long envious of his cousin Soliman's

Adroit diplomacy of Alexius; jealousy and divisions of Seljukids.

Adroit diplomacy of Alexius; jealousy and divisions of Seljukids.

fame and wide dominions, drove him to suicide, and became the foremost figure among the Seljuks next to the throne. Asia Minor breaks up like Germany at the Great Interregnum into numberless petty emirates; and at Nice Aboul-Cassim disposes at will of the late Sultan's power, creates his brother Pulchas emir in Cappadocia, and assumes the airs of an independent Sultan. This was now the opportunity of Alexius. Malek Shah, in his turn, was suspicious of his brother's rising renown, and allies with the empire. Alexius, adroitly tampering with the envoy sent to arrange terms, secures the restoration of Sinope, and creates the now Christian emissary, Duke of Anchialus, to shield him from his master's resentment on the unknown continent of Europe. He converted Aboul-Cassim, taught prudence by two defeats, into a friend and ally, indulged him (on a visit to the capital, still splendid and inviolate) with all kinds of pleasures and sights, and invented for his vanity the unmeaning title σεβαστότατος! Meantime (while Alexius restored, owing to this alliance, the Roman power in Bithynia), Malek Shah attempted to convince Aboul that he was but a subject, a lieutenant, and a rebel. Attempting to appease him, he is strangled by his orders in far Khorasan.—Such, then, was the state of affairs in the early reign of Alexius; he had recovered large districts by personal prowess or diplomacy, and the intestine discords of a quarrelsome and suspicious family allowed him to complete his success. Meantime, Armenians are still prominent as ever in the imperial armies. His most trusted generals were natives; Nicolas "Branas" or Varaz, and Pacurian, who is Bacouran in his own tongue. We are not in the least surprised to find Taticius (?Tadjat), (the Saracen son of a brigand-captain, reduced to slavery by Alexius' father), in command of a Persian colony in Macedonia: these bore the name Βαρδαριῶται, or Vardariots, from the

Armenians high in the Imperial service.

river Bardar, not far from Achrida. These claimed descent from the Persian contingents of Babec and Theophobus, prudently distributed among all the Roman *themes* (*c.* 840); gave an Armenian name to the classical stream; and sustained in this foreign land the tradition of the corps. Similar Eastern reinforcements came from the isolated Paulician centre of Philippopolis, where heretics of Armenian descent kept up their faith and customs. Nor was the voluntary aid of the semi-independent Cilician princes behindhand; the prince of Lambrôn, Ochin, joins Alexius' armies, is nearly killed at the engagement of Dyrrhachium, owes his recovery to the devoted care of the emperor (admirable friend and placable foe), and procures the appointment of Prince (or Duke) of Tarsus, with the title of Augustus (Σεβαστος). Ochin, father of Haiton (Haythonus), is the ancestor of St. Narses of Lambrôn.

Armenians high in the Imperial service.

§ 3. Meantime, how fared the Armenian population, as yet true to their native soil? The rule of Malek Shah over the vassal-princes was mild and indulgent to the Christians throughout the East, with that true indifference to religious forms which marks the Turk and the Mongol. A great part of Armenia was still in Roman hands; and perhaps Ani did not finally leave the empire until 1086. The government was left to the Manoutché; and the Sultan advancing without opposition to the shores of the Black Sea, drove his horse into the waves; thereby solemnly claiming possession, like the Spanish loyalists in the early times of American discovery. To the *manes* of his father he uttered a proud and pious boast: "Your little son, once an infant, now reigns to the uttermost ends of the earth." His general, Pouzan, laid siege to Edessa (1087); and Barsames (son of Philaret), unpopular with the citizens, threw himself from a tower over the wall; and sustaining terrible injuries, was tended till death ensued in the enemy's camp. The Edessenes capitulated; and the town

Mild rule of Malek in Armenia proper.

Mild rule of Malek in Armenia proper.

continued under Turkish influence, and *perhaps* under a Roman governor, until the coming of Baldwin and the creation of the first independent Latin principality. In 1088 Gandzac was taken by assault, and Phatloun (grandson of the first emir) was taken prisoner and replaced by another governor. While the realm was extending, internal administration was not without merit. The patriarch Barsegh (or Basil) applied to the Sultan for the diminution of imposts and tributes (1090) and also of the number of patriarchs, no less vexatious.

Conciliation of Armenians.

The scattered faithful of the Armenian Church recognised four metropolitan sees, and it seemed probable that with each new principality of refugees the archiepiscopal control would be further divided. Basil secures the resignation or submission of the patriarch of Honi (after a fourteen years' rule) and of the patriarch of Edessa. About this time, such was the favour extended by the Sultan, Liparit (no doubt kinsman of the earlier broken reed) embraced Islam; and Gorigos (already named as Albanian king in Chaki), visits the Persian court and returns loaded with gifts. Sometime before his death (the computation of time being obscure in Samuel of Ani and others), Malek Shah, significantly accompanied by this Albanian king and a certain George II. of some petty Caucasian monarchy, advances from Khorasan to capture Antioch; Philaret, who seems to have maintained friendly terms with the various masters of the city, was indemnified by the charge of Marach, the price of his conversion to the Mahometan faith. Malek, from Antioch as his headquarters, pushed forward to the Mediterranean, and there in the same dramatic fashion took possession of the Southern Sea. The death of this wise and tolerant potentate (1092, but according to Samuel of Ani, 1095) was the signal for civil war, and the disruption of the empire which he had done so much to consolidate. Toutoush was suspected of poisoning his brother,

His wise reign followed by civil strife (1092 1097).

and his claim (natural enough in Turkish tradition) was not recognised. Pouzan, the great general, like Bahram the Persian, rebels, but is defeated and killed; the sceptre was not to pass out of the line of Seljuk. The four years of civil war dissolved the strength of the military caste; many rebel captains tender homage, and Barkiarok, son of Malek, is able to establish himself in Armenia and Persia, and finally to remove his uncle Toutoush in 1097.

His wise reign followed by civil strife (1092–1097).

§ 4. But to return: the death of Malek had immediate effect on the Sultanate of Nice (1092) and the fortunes of the empire. Two sons of Soliman escape from their honourable captivity as hostages for their father's allegiance; and David Kilig Arslan I., the elder, is welcomed by the Nicenes with genuine heartiness. He secures the permanence and contentment of the Turkish garrison by sending for their wives and children, and replaces the suspected Pulchas (brother of the late rebel governor) by Mohammed, with the title "first of Emirs." Alexius had not been able of late to pursue his persistent policy of recuperation. The Comans and Patzinaks spread more terror in the capital than the nearer yet less deadly Turks. In 1091, Alexius was exposed to yet another Armenian plot: Ariebus (Ariev, *Arm.* = sun) conspires with a Frank to kill the hard-working prince; the plot was discovered and the conspirators treated with that excessive leniency which is a standing marvel in all Byzantine rulers, and Alexius in particular. Trebizond now begins to enter into serious history and give an augury of its future fame. Malek might ride proudly into the Euxine, but the empire still possessed the seaports and convoys of the northern coast of Asia Minor. It had shown a stout resistance to the Turks, and it may be surmised that Pontus was still independent. A native, Theodore Gabras, recovered it from their hands and received his own conquest in fief from the emperor with the ducal title; while Gregory, his son, was invited to

Seljuks at Nice.

Armenian plot against Alexius; the Duchy of Trebizond.

Armenian plot against Alexius; the Duchy of Trebizond.

the capital for an alliance with the imperial house and formally betrothed to Mary, then aged six years. (The impetuous and ungrateful youth was involved in a plot against his benefactor and sovereign; but was merely confined among the Paulician colony at Philippopolis.) We may inquire, without requiring or expecting a reply, whether at some time Trebizond did not fall under the sway of David III. the Repairer, king of Georgia from 1090–1130? His sway extended over all Lazica; but if he controlled Trebizond it was for a brief space. Theodore Gabras chased him as he had chased the Turks.

General state of East on the arrival of the Crusaders.

The Armenian emirs, relieved of the control of a firm yet benevolent Sultan, oppressed their subjects after 1092. A fresh exodus transported many natives into the artificial Armenia of king Reuben, and still further denuded the original home of the race. Monks above all fled from the wrath to come. Yet Ani still remained a centre of patriotic sentiment: Gregory, father of the patriarch Basil, repelled an assault on Ani, and followed up his victory by using the troops of Emir Manoutché to obtain possession of Gagsovan, himself falling in the successful assault. Meantime, the Armenian servants of the empire showed the old aptitude for conspiracy, to be met by the consistent clemency of the Cæsar; in 1093, Michael the Taronite, brother-in-law of Alexius, dignified by the title Πανυπερσέβαστος, joined the futile conspiracy of Diogenes (son of the late emperor). A *second* Catacalon Catacecaumenus (from Phrygia?), who had served gallantly at the Calabrya engagement, was also found among the insurgents. Exile and confiscation follow discovery; but John Taronite, son of Michael, is continued in office and favour.—On the eve of the first Crusade, there was peace in the East; and the undisputed realm of David Kilig Arslan I. stretched from Orontes and Euphrates to the Bosphorus. (We may note in passing that about this time Alexius entertained a

proposal to welcome the English refugees from Norman tyranny at the seaport of Cibotus, near Nicomedia. Saxon guardsmen were not uncommon, but an English settlement was never an accomplished fact on the shores of the cosmopolitan empire.)

General state of East on the arrival of the Crusaders.

§ 5. The Crusaders arrived and the Roman world was thrown open to the foreigners, like the Middle Kingdom in our own day. They came not as recruits or settlers, but as visitors, doubtful allies, finally as foes and conquerors. We will only follow events in the familiar campaign so far as they concern our purpose, the re-establishment of Roman authority in the peninsula, and the condition of the Armenian race. The fall of Nice in 1097 implied the removal of the Seljuk capital or rather headquarters from the immediate vicinity of Constantinople; and from this fateful moment Roman influence steadily revived. The next conquest of importance was Edessa, where Baldwin fixed the earliest independent principality. There was still a shadow left in that city of Roman power; as in the cities of Northern Gaul in the time of Clovis and Syagrius. Thoros (Theodore) had received his commission from Romanus IV. (*c.* 1070); and after the manifold vicissitudes of Oriental fortresses, with their almost annual change of masters, he had somehow managed during the inroads of Philaret, Barsames, and Pouzan to retain a delegated, or acquire an independent, authority.[1] Edessa welcomed the Latin; perhaps the Frankish settlers had made a better impression in the East than their countrymen elsewhere. The aged Thoros adopted Baldwin as his son and shares the govern-

Reconquest of Nice; Latin *replace* Armenian *principalities.*

Latins fraternise with Armenians.

[1] He is Gibbon's "*Greek* or *Armenian* tyrant, who had been suffered under the Turkish yoke to reign over the Christians of Edessa." He was of course an Armenian; and the Turks, without regular method of government, employed harmless officials or native princes, much as the Western invaders availed themselves of the existing methods of Roman bureaucracy and finance. In the constant Seljukian feuds there was every opportunity for such a viceroy to assume an independent rôle.

Latins fraternise with Armenians.

ment; but he perishes in an obscure popular rising, and the whole-hearted allegiance of the citizens is transferred to the Latin adventurer. Armenians aided him; a certain Bagrat was a warm supporter (probably not a member of the dynasty); and Constantine I. added his help, king in Cilician Armenia, who had succeeded on Reuben's death after a reign of fifteen years (1080–1095).[1] It was this first inheritor of a romantic crown who moved the capital to a fortress newly acquired, Vahca in Cilicia, aided by the loyal support of Bazouni, Prince of Lambrôn, and Ochin his brother, governor and Duke of Tarsus (in virtue of a direct imperial commission).

Their services to the Crusaders.

It would appear that the forms of feudalism and aristocratic independence were carefully preserved in the new kingdom; that the lesser princes warmly supported a tactful and courageous monarch; and that over all, the empire threw a vague halo of suzerain influence and honorific titles, as it had done (for instance) on the Lazic and Iberian sovereign in happier days. Nor were the Armenians unfriendly either to Turks or to Crusaders: so efficient and opportune were the subsidies of king Constantine to the famished Latins that, on the capture of Antioch, he was richly recompensed, and believed his royal dignity further augmented, by the grateful titles, *marquis*, *aspet*, and ὕπατος. The Western powers did not forget this seasonable aid; Gregory XIII. mentions his services to the cause of Christendom in a Bull of 1584.—In this same year, 1097, we read of the succession of a grandson of Gregory μάγιστρος to the feudal fortress of Dzophk in the old Fourth Armenia: he was an Arsacid on his mother's side (a sister of the patriarch Gregory); and while his brother attained patriarchal rank in Egypt, his son Narses was celebrated for his elegant Armenian

[1] It is fair to say that some authors cannot identify this Constantine with the king, but suppose him to be a feudal prince of Gargar, a district near Marach.

writings,—a taste which was a family gift from his ancestor in the days of Basil II.

Rivals to Seljuks; Latins at Antioch and Edessa; the Danishmand.

§ 6. Boëmund (the constant foe and at last the humble vassal of the adroit emperor) founded the principality of Antioch in 1098, destined to survive for nearly two hundred years under nine princes. It was in vain that the Sultan sent a great force of 360,000 men under Korbouga.[1] Anna Comnena's ἀναρίθμητοι χιλίαδες were swept away or annihilated by the courage of famished despair. Armenia proper was exposed to an invasion of Soliman, son of Ortukh, who marched into Vanand. But the Seljuks were already enfeebled by contested claims and the revolt of lieutenants; the curious and obscure power of the Danishmand had been established in the neighbourhood of Sivas.[2] He was a *lettered* Armenian apostate (such were the careless or democratic methods of the Turks) who governed the territory of Sebastè (lately occupied by Atom and his brother), and had joined the district of Malatiyah (Melitenè). Lying between Rûm and the suzerain-sultanate he

[1] This dignitary is oddly named by Matthew of Edessa, *Couropaghat* (the Armenian transliteration of *Curopalat*): his full name would seem to be Kawām ad-Dawlā (pillar of the State) Kurbughā; and if in the Chanson d'Antioche he is termed *Carbaran d'Oliferne*, I am inclined to believe some legend compared him to Holofernes, and told (no doubt untruly) of some feminine stratagem by which he was overcome.

[2] This obscure dynasty, at first helpers of Kilig Arslan and then rivals or foes of his house, are perhaps the only family who have gloried in the scholastic title of "pedagogue." The name means schoolmaster, and is borne not only by the founder Tailu but by his successors, to the despair of the numismatologist of princely series. His eldest son, Khazi, speedily learnt the *Turkish* lesson, "the slaughter of the innocents" (or did he set the terrible precedent?). He mounted the throne (1104) in the same year that removed Soliman, son of Ortukh, Toutoush, Seljukian prince of Damascus, and the Great Sultan Barkiarok. But he at once murdered his eleven brethren. On the death of Soliman, the family possessed the centres of Sivas, Tokat, Nicsar, Ablastan, Malatiyah, and perhaps Kastamouni; and may well have begun their ambitious career directly after the death of Romanus IV. (1071). Ahmed Khazi (†1135) was succeeded by the short reign of his son, Mohammed (†1143), and it was only on the extinction of this house, after a century's power (1175), that the kingdom of Rûm again revived.

Rivals to Seljuks; Latins at Antioch and Edessa; the Danishmand.

reigned as an independent prince, coerced the former power as it was closed in by the judicious advances of Alexius, and perhaps atoned by this unwilling service to the empire for the sin of apostasy. But in no way did he deserve so well of the emperor as in his imprisonment of the Prince of Antioch. He captured him on a field, where two militant Armenian prelates are said to have met their fate, held him to ransom, and accepted the price of 10,000 gold pieces from another Armenian, the general Basil (Barshegh) the Robber, Prince of Kesoun. Tancred, regent for the absent prince, repudiated the debt, and increased the bounds of the principality; yet while he thus despoiled the robber by a mean evasion, he contrived to secure the alliance of the Armenian princes. But meantime the empire was just preparing to make good its suzerain-rights over the vassal-kingdom. The imperialist generals Butumites (1103) and Monastras (1104) established once more Roman prestige; the one by seizing Marach and leaving troops there, the latter, by the occupation of Tarsus, Adana, and Mopsuestia (Mamistria); and, as some would convey, of the entire province. Seven years before, William of Tyre may well be pardoned for supposing Tarsus to be in *Turkish* hands, though it was still under an imperial lieutenant, Ochin: for the allegiance to the far-off emperor was a mere shadow of servitude. But the early years of this twelfth century witnessed a great and welcome reaction in the tide of Roman fortunes; and, if to use Gibbon's *suppressed* simile, the jackal (Alexius) followed the lions, it is certain that he knew how to turn to advantage both his own victories and their mistakes. In 1105, there are to our surprise two efficient imperial armies in the East, in Syria under Cantacuzen, and in Cilicia under Monastras; and when the latter is relieved, his successor is known by an Armenian title not a name,—*Aspet* (Ἀσπέτης), constable, which to the Greek

Imperial recovery in East; expedition to Cilicia, 1103, 1104.

ears may have suggested some Homeric adjective, the "immense" or "unspeakable." Constantine I. had died in 1099; and Thoros or Theodore had succeeded to rule in the "land of Thoros." Under Roman influence and approval, he enlarged his mountain-realm, added Anazarbus to the important fortress of Kendroscavi, and (with the Moslem loyally obedient) ruled over a mixed population and a tract of two days' by sixteen days' journey. It is hard to say whether the imperial army superseded, or supported, or competed with the royal authority. Certain it is that the Aspetes gained a peculiar notoriety for somnolence and excess; and in a drunken slumber was transported unconscious to Antioch by Tancred, who secured Mamistria and predominant influence in Cilicia. (It is only fair to add that the incident is unknown to Armenian writers, and may be as apocryphal as Anna Comnena's legend of Boëmund and the cock in the coffin.)

Curious treatment of the Roman general.

§ 7. But the province was unsettled and tempting enough to attract the Great Sultan himself. In 1107 or 1108, Taphar (Barkiarok's successor) ravaged the land of king Thoros. Basil sets on him and defeats, returning in patriotic joy to his fortress-capital Kesoun. But Taphar comes back ashamed and angry with a larger force, and lays siege to Harthan. Once more Basil achieves a notable victory, and receives a petition for reinforcements from Baldwin of Edessa, to which he assents. But to his surprise he learns that his men are to be used against Tancred; he sharply refused to go against one "who had always been friendly to the Armenians." Now it may be possible, with this indirect intimation, to give some account of the perplexing changes in Cilician "Armenia" which we have just recorded. If Tancred was their firm and trusty friend, his advent and capture of the Aspet (Alexius' general) was either purely apocryphal or carried out in alliance with the native princes. Here

War of Seljuks and Armenia of Cilicia.

Amity of Armenia and Tancred of Antioch.

Amity of Armenia and Tancred of Antioch.

we may well suspect another instance of the alienation of the feudal mind (very local, personal, and impulsive) at the uniform demands of imperialism. Though himself an Armenian, the Aspet may have come as a helper of the nationalists, and ended, as other Byzantine captains, as a foe more hated than the infidel. But in the welter of feudalism it is not easy to extricate the thread of private motive, much less that of political principle; and a great change comes over the East in 1108, when the "thirty years' war" is over with Boëmund, and the fiercest assailant of the empire becomes the dutiful liegeman (λίζιος) of Alexius. The terms of this curious infeudation are little short of amazing: the emperor grants what he certainly could not give, and makes over a life-interest to his vassal and feudal control over a district, including the towns of Antioch, Borzes, Shizar (Larissa on the Orontes), Artakh, Tolukh, Saint Elias, Marach, and the districts of Pagres, Palaza, and Zymè; always excepting that which belongs to the Armenian subjects of the empire. From the ancient duchy of Antioch was detached all Cilicia east of the Cydnus, and a portion of Syria round Laodicea, Gabala, Marathus, Antaradus, and Batanea. Boëmund secured an annual pension or subsidy of 200 pounds of gold and the dignified, if unmeaning, title of Σέβαστος: he died in 1111.

Boëmund becomes Vassal of the empire.

(Changes in Roman administration: the Duchy.)

At this point in our story it may be well to notice briefly the changes in Roman provincial government, of which the ducal system is the final phase. At first, governors united civil and military duties; were judge of assize and lord-lieutenant and sheriff all in one. About A.D. 300, the well-known separation of department took place; and specialism reigned supreme down to the days of Heraclius. The *Thematic* scheme recognised the extinction of the civil magistrate and the ascendancy of the captain of the district corps. Localities were renamed after the regimental titles; and the problem of civil

ruler and municipal methods becomes for us insoluble. The vague designations, *Anatolics*, *Armeniacs*, *Buccellarians*, *Cibyrrhæots*, and the like, disappear in their turn ; the commanders are Domestics, and the old classical nomenclature is revived for the countries of Asia Minor. A last step is the transference of control to dukes ruling the garrison in important centres as Antioch, and acting as arbiter in the rare disputes which could not be settled by local custom and precedent. It may be doubted whether these local and urban duchies were a reminiscence of the early Latin title (so common in Ammianus) or came back into use by way of Spoleto and Benevent and the lessons taught by Southern Italy. *(Changes in Roman administration: the Duchy.)*

§ 8. In 1107, we must notice a plot against Alexius, Armenian according to some authors, Pontic in the account of others. Was Gregory, now Duke of Trebizond, the Taronite who displaced the suspected Gabras clan? Or was he the Gregory Gabras himself, affianced to the emperor's daughter Mary, who had already conspired, and been already forgiven? I am inclined to respect both the judgment of Fallmerayer and the well-known indulgence of the emperor. Seizing Trebizond as an independent domain or fortress, like the emirs around him, Danishmand or other, he was confronted by a Taronite (his own cousin, if we believe the former story). Brought captive to Byzantium, he almost eluded the imperial clemency by the violence of his language ; but mollified by captivity and time he mends his ways, is restored to favour, and once more regains his duchy by the favour of the generous emperor. Captured (if it be still the same governor and not a son) in 1142 by the Danishmand Emir of Melitenè and the Emir of Kamakh, he was able to offer the enormous ransom of 30,000 pieces of gold, a certain sign of the original wealth and power of rapid recovery which the great coast-towns of Lesser Asia always possessed. *Another Armenian conspiracy.*

Desultory fighting in East between Franks and Armenians.

In 1109 the restless spirit of Norse individualism or crusading zeal led Baldwin and Joscelin into an attack upon Harran. Apolasar, Prince of Taron, joined them (as he had joined Cilician Basil some time before against the Seljuks): he met his death in the expedition. The Emir of Mosul made reprisals and laid siege to Edessa, retiring before the united forces of the Christian princes, but returning after their departure to inflict serious damage on the city. Next year, the Turks invade the "realm of Thoros"; but the king with his brother Leo (Ghevond) can repulse their attacks. In default they turn (1110) against the little feudal fortress of Dzophk in the Mesopotamian district, where the new prince Apirat, of the brave stock of Gregory μάγιστρος, is completely successful; but in the moment of victory is killed by a chance arrow from an ambuscade. Next year, Tancred and Basil vanish from the turbulent scene.—Meantime, in Lesser Asia the Seljukian kingdom of Rûm had been enjoying a certain respite from its anxieties; Kilig Arslan I.'s son was careful to maintain good terms with the reviving empire, and with a prince who knew how to turn every success and every failure to his own profit. But on his Eastern frontier (if we may use the term of his vague and shifting "sphere of influence" round Iconium) he knew no security. The "Schoolmaster" dynasty gave him no peace; and in 1112 he drowned himself in the river Chaldras near Edessa to escape his foe, the Emir Dcholi; he had reigned six years (1106–12). His son "Saisan" pursued a more vigorous policy; he ravaged the open country of the Romans from Philadelphia to the Ionian coast. That city (destined in later times to be the last solitary outpost of Roman power in Asia) contained a strong garrison under Constantine Gabras: and neighbouring Pergamus was held by the veteran Monastras. Gabras, retrieving the treason of his family, and justifying the wise confidence of the emperor, defeats Saisan and forces him to

Difficulties of Rûm.

sue for peace; it was concluded on honourable terms.

Alexius checks an inroad from Khorasan.

A great blow fell on the Western provinces in the next year: the central Seljukian power in Khorasan aimed a deadly stroke at the reviving prosperity of Asia. All the country from Nice to Adramyttium was ravaged; and all the coast-towns along Troas and Mysia were sacked, with Prusa, Apollonia, and Cyzicus. Eustachius Camyzes, governor of Nice, was defeated and captured; and it was the veteran Alexius in person who turned the scale. Twice he defeated the Turks, and returned home to receive the sincere congratulations of the capital. This victory ensured a welcome term of peace.

Armenian sovereigns and the Earthquake.

§ 9. About this time happened the great earthquake described by Matthew of Edessa, which in the distressed country added the catastrophes of Nature to the gratuitous havoc of man. Chiefly attacking the neighbourhood of Samosata, Kesoun, and Marach, it is said to have destroyed 40,000 Turks. The conservative character of the princes of the East is here well displayed, a contrast to the mere destructive raids which seem so often to exhaust the Turks' conception of "administration." The Armenian kings Thoros and Leo hasten, like modern sovereigns, to the scene, and bestir themselves to relieve the distressed and raise their shattered homes; their humane efforts are seconded by a Camsar prince in Mesopotamia, Basil the Child.—We have read of the aid and countenance given by these Armenian princes to the Crusaders: the return was not seldom a sorry one, and the extinction of these small and ancient sovereignties was hastened by the crafty greed of the Latin, no less than by the jealous centralism of Byzantium, or the wanton destructiveness of the Seljuk. Baldwin, Prince or Count of Edessa, having married his sister to Leo of Cilicia, lures Basil into confinement and seizes his estates. Alexius, unable to avenge this treacherous act,

Baldwin of Edessa reduces the Armenian principalities.

Baldwin of Edessa reduces the Armenian principalities.

welcomed the dispossessed prince with the invariable Byzantine courtesy. The only son of Thoros, Constantine, died at this juncture. Suspicion pointed an idle finger at the intrigues of his uncle Leo ; and if we were inclined to impute motive or listen to slander, we might suppose that Leo and Baldwin had conspired to divide between them the remnants of the Christian kingdoms in the Mesopotamian region. In 1117, Baldwin continued his offensive policy. Ignorant of the arts of peace or the duties of a ruler, he confused thoughtless acquisitiveness with statesmanship ; and believed that he governed when he merely laid waste and thwarted development: he attacked the town and province of Pir lying southwest of Sroudj, and was delayed a whole year before the principal fortress. He deprived another Armenian prince of his estates, a former ally of the *first* Baldwin, and thus ungratefully repaid his imprudent services: he took from him the town and residence of Araventan.

State of Asia Minor, 1120, restless policy of Rûm.

Meantime the gradual desolation of the fertile and populous Lesser Asia was stealthily and steadily proceeding. Clouds of Turks, Turkmans, and Kurds poured in, bands succeeding one after the other, pillaging and wasting, and even demolishing the ancient and deserted sites to pitch their nomad tents over the ruins of Lydian, Hellenic, and Roman culture. "Saisan" again breaks faith with the empire ; and Alexius, now a martyr to the gout, rises from his sick-bed to teach him a lesson. He projected the capture of Iconium, for twenty years the headquarters of the Seljukian encampment, in answer to the insulting farces of the palace, where his malady was caricatured amid the laughter of the Sultan and courtiers. Several brave but indecisive engagements were fought near Nicomedia ; and Bardas (grandson of Burtzes, commander under Basil II.) was entrusted with a troop to reconquer his heritage, which, now occupied by Turks, had been then bestowed as a

reward of merit. It is uncertain whether he attained his end; but it is clear that Alexius and Bardas repulsed the Turks, and welcomed to an asylum in Constantinople a multitude of expatriated Asiatics, followed by wives and children, with that protective instinct which, sometimes obscured, never failed entirely in the rulers of Rome. Alexius established for their benefit monasteries, almshouses, and hospitals; and in 1116 opened his doors wide to admit the monks of Iberia, who came westward in crowds from the turmoil of the new invaders to the settled and orderly commonwealth,—which, having enervated its citizens by relieving them of arms and military duties, could do no less than protect them.—Saisan, a prince of inconsequent spirit and easily repenting of his boldness, soon sued for peace after a personal defeat. He showed his intense reverence for the imperial dignity and its wearer by dutiful courtesy on a Phrygian plain, where the two monarchs held an interview. But once more fraternal discord intervened, not to save Rome from a foe but to spoil a welcome treaty; Masoud, no doubt representing the "unbending Turk party," murdered his brother on his return. In 1118 died the Emperor Alexius I., and it is not without import that, when John his son marches to the palace to secure the succession, he should meet Abasgian envoys on the way, bringing the daughter of David III. the Restorer to marry a member of the noble house of Bryennius. With this last instance of the continuous relations of these countries to the empire, we shall end this historical sketch.

State of Asia Minor, 1120, restless policy of Rûm.

Homage to Alexius; his death.

APPENDIX

(I venture to annex another account of the motives and significance of the Revolutions (695, &c.) during the Anarchy. It was written in a somewhat different connection and with another purpose. It is hoped that the two versions may be mutually complementary.)

THE ARISTOCRACY AND THE PROVINCIAL REGIMENTS; OR EMPEROR, SENATE, AND ARMY DURING THE GREAT ANARCHY (690–720)

Predominance of the provincial regiments: the empire now Asiatic.

§ 1. THE monarchy under the Heracliads was unpopular with both ranks in the State-service; and however beneficial the work of former rulers, nothing but good fortune and great personal tact could uphold the central power. In the summary deposition and mutilation of Justinian II. by an obscure cabal it had suffered a grievous blow. In the next brief period between Justinian's first dethronement and the peaceful secession of Theodosius III. (685–717), the two parties in the State contend for the mastery. No question is raised of altering the form of the constitution; but the sovereign is to be rendered harmless, a negligible quantity. The provincial regiments, created in the newly recovered districts of Lesser Asia, and to some extent in the vague centres of imperial influence still left in Hellas and Thrace, usurp a prominent share in the election of rulers, which the Eastern realm but rarely witnesses. Phocas, indeed, had been the disastrous product of a military revolution; Heraclius, like Galba, Vespasian or Severus, had arrived at the head of a local contingent to save the capital from itself. But in the curious and often decisive prominence of the Obsicians and Anatolics, it is possible

Predominance of the provincial regiments: the empire now Asiatic.

to detect a wider and deeper issue than the mere brute force and narrow motive of local levies. The Roman Empire, with its centre of gravity, is being shifted eastward; and although the ambiguous city of Constantine hangs doubtfully between either continent, there is no question in the next age of its orientation. The desolation of Thrace, the wide, autonomous, and pastoral communities of "Sclavinia," the ebbing of the tide of Roman and Hellenic influence in the European part of the empire, the rare oases of urban culture and commerce clinging to the outskirts of a barbaric continent, the shifting of interest to the lands most imperilled by the Arab advance,—this is the picture which the obscure records of the Heracliads open to us. The empire was in truth confined as an effective power to Asia Minor; and with Asia Minor will rest the arbitrament of its future destinies. The torch of the Roman tradition had passed from Spaniard to African and Syrian, and from these again to Illyrians and Pannonians. We have shown how from Decius to the second Justin (250–578) the Balkan peninsula supplies Rome both with sovereigns and soldiers. A new epoch opens in the last years of the sixth century; and it is not without good reason that (as Gibbon tells us), "Tiberius by the Arabs and Maurice by the Italians are distinguished as the first of the Greek Cæsars." But strictly Hellenic influence was never fated to predominate at Byzantium that anomalous outpost of Roman law in the Greek and Oriental world. Infrequent, precarious, and unsuccessful is the intervention of an authority purely Greek; it is largely feminine, and is therefore strongest when indirectly exerted. Still the Roman ideal called from the very ends of the earth representatives of divers races to carry on the imperishable tradition; but it did nót appeal, or it appealed in vain, to its ancient rivals, the Greeks. Whatever the exact nationality of Heraclius, he is plainly typical

of Roman character ; and his eyes look westwards to Africa and Italy. But after the reign of Constantine IV. there is no further hesitation as to the important part to be played by Byzantium in the further East ; the reforms and Thematic reorganisation did little or nothing for Europe, everything for Asia Minor. The sceptre passes to Armenia and Syria ; and the European side plays (until the days of Basil II.) an insignificant rôle in the fortunes of that strange fiction, the "commonwealth of the Romans."

Predominance of the provincial regiments : the empire now Asiatic.

§ 2. The reconquest from Persia, the needs of defence west of Mount Taurus against the caliphate, had decided the form of the new administration. Great districts were roughly mapped out for the patrol of permanent legions, with no great solicitude for precise frontiers or well-defined duties. I am not convinced that civil magistrates, despatched from the capital, vanished entirely from the scene ; but their powers were now subordinate, and enter nowhere into the light of political interest. The cities had their respectable or episcopal rulers ; the country its semi-feudal chieftains, not seldom wisely identified by the government with the regimental leaders. The legislation of Leo III. shows the tendency of an earlier age ; neither the serf nor the small yeoman proprietor survived. Castles rose in Cappadocian fastnesses ; already under Phocas and Heraclius, a local nobleman was able in true mediæval fashion to baffle and mortify the sovereign and entertain the forces of the State as if they formed a private militia. The armies were necessary ; first Anatolics, Obsicians, Armeniacs, and then as needs multiplied, Thracensians, Optimates, Buccellarians. But it was essential that they should be governed from the centre ; and as the centre was never too stable in the empire with all its majestic pretension, they ended in controlling rather than being controlled. We find under Constantine IV. the half-religious, half-military rising in favour of a triad of

Permanent Thematic armies.

Revolutions of 695, 698.

emperors; and though beaten then, the provincial army does not forget. Leontius was named General of Hellas when he opened the Byzantine Bastille and overthrew the tyrant (685); but he had commanded the Anatolics, had served with distinction in the far East, and derived his ancestry from Isauria. He is replaced by a Gotho-Greek from Pamphylia, whose barbarous name Apsimar bears witness to his original race. Not for the first or last time do we record the rebellion of an army disgraced and defeated, the insurrection and success of a general who had failed. The expedition to relieve Carthage had proved abortive, apparently owing to the dissensions of the lieutenants, their reluctant support to John the Patrician. Fearing his protest at the capital, they united and elected an admiral,—sailing, as Romanus Lecapenus and his companions two hundred years later, to upset the reigning prince. This mutiny is maritime and Asiatic; it is indifferent to race, but it is a respecter of names, and seeks (as it would appear) to affiliate itself to the fallen house of the second Justinian. The name Tiberius is revived, borne by two joint-emperors in the century before; and the new ruler, when he bestows on his brother sole command of the Asiatic cavalry, and of the passes of Cappadocia, gives him the not less venerable name of "Heraclius." Both these revolutions, then, are Asiatic, and while a general expels a tyrant, an admiral, quite in the manner of Septimius Severus, reverts to the exiled line in his choice of imperial titles. The restoration of Justinian II. by the help of Terbelis, the Bulgarian chief and Roman "Cæsar," need not detain us; the Armenian Vardan (afterwards Philippicus) is saluted emperor at Cherson by an alliance of mutinous troops and terrified citizens,—for Justinian had sent orders to raze it to the ground and exterminate the inhabitants.

Justinian restored: revolutions of 711, 713.

§ 3. We must notice the secondary place of the Senate during the rule of Leontius the Isaurian, Apsimar the Gotho-Greek and Asiatic, and Justinian's

second brief reign of revenge. It exercises no influence on the changes in succession; and it seems to have been coerced, like the rest of the representative classes in the city, into raising funds for the equipment of the expedition against Cherson. (Theoph.: Ἰουστινιανὸς . . . ἐξοπλίσας στόλον πολὺν . . . ἀπὸ διανομῆς τῶν οἰκούντων τὴν πόλιν συγκλητικῶν τε κ. ἐργαστηριακῶν κ. δημοτῶν κ. παντὸς ὀφφικίου. We shall find these guilds of artisans mentioned again as consulted by the sovereign, Leo IV., when he names his little son Constantine as his successor in A.D. 776.) Nicephorus, using and perhaps perverting the same anonymous authority on which Theophanes depended: ἔκ τε τῶν στρατιωτικῶν καταλόγων ἔτι δὲ καὶ τοῦ γεωργικοῦ κ. τῶν βαναυσικῶν τεχνῶν τῶν τε ἐκ τῆς συγκλήτου βουλῆς κ. τοῦ τῆς πόλεως δήμου. The Senate suffered severely along with the leaders of the army from the anger of the restored exile (Theoph.: ἀναρίθμητον πλῆθος ἔκ τε τοῦ πολιτικοῦ κ. τοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ καταλόγου ἀπώλεσεν. Zonaras slightly alters the sense, in paraphrasing the common original which, as Bury suggests, may well be the "*acta*" of the *demes*: πολὺ δὲ πλῆθος ἔκ τε τοῦ δημοτικοῦ κ. τοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ διέφθειρεν. The two terms are not synonymous, and I prefer to keep the word πολιτικὸν for the higher and official class.) When we pass to the next revolution which disposed of the incompetent and luxurious Armenian, we have a curious instance both of the power and of the thoughtless shortsight of the military faction. The Obsicians blind and depose Philippicus, but have taken no measure to secure a successor; and once more the august names of the "Senate and People" are invoked to cover the hasty selection of a chief secretary, Artemius, by a determined minority, who still retained their presence of mind. It seems evident that Philippicus favoured the civilian element at the expense of the soldiers; he celebrated his birthday by a public festival and races, and by a banquet with the nobles

Justinian restored: revolutions of 711, 713.

Shortsight of military conspirators.

Shortsight of military conspirators.

(μετὰ πολιτῶν ἀρχαιογενῶν ἀριστῆσαι). It is also clear that the warrior-faction took no steps to provide an emperor; for the first act of the new sovereign is to blind and exile the sacrilegious authors of the crime which raised him to power. We cannot doubt that once more the palace-faction profited by the military oversight, and got ready a candidate to be crowned on Whitsunday; Theoph. merely *σωρευθέντος τοῦ λαοῦ εἰς τὴν μεγαλὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐστέφθη Ἀρτέμιος ὁ πρωτο ασηκρῆτις.* Nicephorus somewhat more explicit, but not more instructive: *ἀθροισθεὶς ὁ τῆς πόλεως ἅπας δῆμος πρὸς τὸ ἱερὸν . . . τέμενος ἀναγορεύουσιν εἰς βασιλέα Ἀρτέμιον, Φιλιππικοῦ γραμματέα τυγχάνοντα, οὓς τῇ Ἰταλῶν φωνῇ καλοῦσιν ἀσηκρῆτις.* It is reserved for Zonaras to display a precision which is suspicious; first, the guests of the monarch, as at the King's dinner to the Jockey Club, are select nobles, or as some aver, the winners in the day's races, xiv. 25, *συσσίτους τινας τῶν τῆς συγκλήτου πεποίητο, ὡς δ' ἔνιοι λέγουσι, τοὺς ἐν τῇ τῶν ἵππων ἁμίλλῃ νικησάντας*; next, he is killed, not by a discontented military faction of Obsicians then stationed in Thrace, but by Senators; *παρὰ τινῶν τῶν τῆς γερουσίας κατασχεθεὶς τυφλοῦται*: lastly, the Senate and people elect and salute Artemius (*οἵ τε τῆς συγκλήτου βουλῆς κ. ὁ δημώδης ὄχλος*), changing his name (as was then the custom) to the once unpopular designation of "Anastasius." It is far more probable that the account of the earlier historians is true; it was a *military* rising against a partially successful resumption of *civilian* sway. Vardan neglected the army and ruled, as Nicephorus tells us, without dignity or solicitude (*ἀσέμνως κ. ῥαθύμως*). But the more crafty order made use of the victory to score another civilian triumph in the nomination of Artemius; and it is to his credit first, that he punished the authors of the revolution, and next, that he gave all attention to the needs of national defence. (Nic.: *δι' ἐπιμελείας τὰ πολεμικὰ πράγματα εἶχε κ. ἄρχοντας ἱκανοὺς πρὸς τάς τούτων διοικήσεις καθίστη.*)

§ 4. Once more is repeated the curious mutiny of troops, conscious of meriting censure. Once more the "Obsicians" encourage themselves by throwing off authority, by refusing to join in the expedition against the Saracens. They kill the Minister of the Exchequer, Deacon John, at Rhodes, and sail off tumultuously to the capital. We may note as a sequel to the Heraclian practice and precedent, the union of sacred and profane offices, or the quest of trustworthy agents in the ranks of the clergy; στρατηγὸν, says Theoph., τὸν διάκονον Ἰωάννην τῆς μεγαλῆς ἐκκλησίας τὸ τηνικαῦτα λογοθετὴν γενικὸν ὑπάρχοντα. We are no little surprised at this strange mingling or confusing of the functions of all three orders in the State,—a deacon is treasurer and Commander-in-chief; nor is our wonder allayed when we find the rebellious and unpatriotic regiment described as headless (ἀκεφάλων ὄντων), and selecting at haphazard when they put into Adramyttium the respectable tax-collector who bears in history the name of Theodosius III. (Theoph., ἐκλήπτορα τῶν δημοσίων φόρων (the others, πράκτορα) . . . ἀπράγμονά τε κ. ἰδιώτην). (Here the verbal resemblance proves the common source of both our clerical historians, Theophanes and Nicephorus; we may in passing notice that the latter, aiming at a greater elegance of style, replaces the colloquial phrase, τὸν βασιλέα ἀνέσκαψαν (= cursed, dug up bones; see the Calopodian colloquy before the "Nika" riots), by the more decorous ἐδυσφήμουν.) For the second time, the capital was exposed to Obsician ravage, sailors and soldiers uniting in the pleasant duty of pillage, τοῦ σὺν αὐτῷ, says Zonaras, ναυτικοῦ τε κ. στρατιωτικοῦ εἰρυέντος πολλὰ τῶν ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις χρημάτων ἡρπάγησαν. Perhaps he is toning down the horrors of this military sack, which displayed clearly the weakness of a purely civil administration and a civil candidate; Theoph. is more definite, οἱ δὲ παράνομοι λαοὶ τοῦ Ὀψικίου ἅμα τῶν Γοτθογραίκων τῇ νυκτὶ εἰς τοὺς οἴκους τῶν πολιτῶν

Mutinous troops and revolt under Theodosius III.

Mutinous troops and revolt under Theodosius III.

διαδραμόντες μεγίστην εἰργάσαντο ἄλωσιν, μηδένος φεισάμενοι. Anastasius II. assumes the monastic garb at Nicæa, and is permitted to retire in safety to Thessalonica. Such, then, was the issue of a sullen and unpremeditated mutiny, without a leader and without a policy. The story of the elevation of Theodosius III. (πρὸς πραγμάτων διοίκησιν κ. ταῦτα βασιλείας σφόδρα ἀποπεφυκώς, Zonaras) recalls the tumultuous and accidental success of Phocas; and although nothing could be more opposed than the characters of the two men, they have this much in common. Both appeared as leaders of a military faction at a moment when such a leader was wanted; and both were entirely incapable of fulfilling their promise and their task. The loyalty of the "Obsicians" melted away. Theodosius was left confronted with a Senate who despised him; and as Maurice found an avenger in Heraclius, so more speedily Conon the Syrian rose as general of the Anatolics to punish not merely the dethroner of Artemius, but the insolence of the West-Asiatic faction.

Civilian capital defenceless before new military concentration.

§ 5. The capital is no less defenceless than Rome found herself in the years following Nero's death. Once more jealous regiments disputed between themselves the prize of victory and plundered the metropolis. Again, on the failure of a legitimate line, civil rule disappeared in anarchy, and men welcomed the first respectable plebeian from the East who came to restore order; Leo III. is a second Vespasian. It must be noted that the anti-imperial campaign of the nobles either failed entirely or took on quite another character. For the Senate gained nothing by the final dethronement of Justinian II.; it was at the mercy of the provincial regiments, and might deem itself fortunate if these marauders had a recognised leader. Gradually, an athletic and warlike nobility, chiefly Asiatic, was supplanting the earlier Civilians, the ἀρχαιογενεῖς, who had long

monopolised the safe seats in the official bureaux. It is perhaps possible to see in this period the revival of a "nationalist" spirit, at least an *esprit de corps* among the legions quartered in certain districts and recruited from the native population. I think, too, it is possible to convey a wrong impression to the reader by using a word of such precise meaning to modern ears. The new "nationalism" was Obsician, Anatolic, or Armeniac, not "Roman," Cappadocian, or even Armenian,—large as is the part played by this last people who almost engross the history of this eighth century. The feuds of the legions last far into Isaurian annals. The rebellion of Artavasdus, the brother-in-law of Constantine V., is not merely a personal quarrel, but a trial of force between two well-matched armies. Justinian II. had combated the rising national tendencies by his despotic policy of resettlement; and Conon, who becomes Leo III., may claim to represent Thrace, whither his parents were transplanted to Mesembria, as well as the distant Isauria or Syria, their original home. Still we may trace the Balkan influence, but it is perhaps fanciful to insist on it. We know they had not been in their new home long enough to have learnt Greek orthodoxy, letters, or culture. The "Isaurian" house represents the old Roman spirit; it is "Byzantine" in its true and proper sense,— practical, austere, warlike, and Protestant, and it beats not without success against the cage of dialectic pietism and civilian intrigue which imprisoned the imperial figure. It was the lack of strict nationality and consistent political aim or intelligence which made the strong hand from time to time welcome and indeed inevitable. So to-day Parliaments tend to break up into group-systems from the simple division of ministry and opposition; and it is in such conflict of petty interests that the central power may possibly hope to recover some of its lost rights and influence.

Civilian capital defenceless before new military concentration.

Armeniacs and Anatolics upset Obsician influence (716, 717).

§ 6. The pretext for Conon's insurrection was indignant support of the dethroned Anastasius II., who had appointed him and the young Armenian Artavasdus to command the Anatolic and Armeniac detachments. The real motive was a profound scorn and hatred of the cowardly "Obsicians," a milder contempt for their nominee, and a desire to fish in troubled waters. The condition of affairs was indeed deplorable. Three times since the first dethronement of Justinian had the capital been exposed to the horrors of a blockade, to the insults and pillage of victorious besiegers.

Security reigned neither in the capital nor on the frontier. The Arab armies were once more in the heart of Asia Minor. The general of the Anatolics had been in favour with Justinian; he owed his present post to Anastasius; and he appeared as a patriotic champion against the infidel, and as a "restorer of the old paths." A formal meeting of patriarch, Senate, and chief magistrates is convened to decide upon the crisis. Theodosius himself proposes the choice of Leo, and the tardy sanction of the ministerial cabinet ratifies the clamour of the Asiatic armies. There was no longer any pretence of recalling the monk Artemius from his exile in Thessalonica: and all classes united to welcome the foreign general who promised to set a firm hand on the helm. It is a point of idle or fanciful significance which the clerkly writers do not forget, that the Saracen army round Amorium were the earliest to salute Leo emperor and to invite the city to join in the shout: ἤρξαντο, says Theoph., εὐφημεῖν τὸν στρατηγὸν Λέοντα βασιλέα παρακαλοῦντες κ. τοὺς ἔσω ταὐτὸ ποιεῖν. It may be a prejudice of orthodox historians to attribute the rise of this half-Mahometan Protestant to the suggestion of the infidel, but the narrative bears clear marks of authenticity. Through

this alliance Maslema attempted to reduce the Roman Empire (εἰρηνεῦσαι μετ' αὐτοῦ κ. δι' αὐτοῦ τὴν Ῥωμανίαν ὑποτάξαι). Leo gets possession of Theodosius' son and puts him in irons with all his suite (χειροῦται μετὰ πάσης τῆς βασιλικῆς ὑπουργίαις κ. τῶν ἐν τέλει ἀνδρῶν τοῦ παλατίου). With this precious hostage he advances to Chrysopolis, and there takes place the assembly noticed above (Theoph., γνοὺς δὲ ὁ Θ. τὰ πραχθέντα κ. βουλευσάμενος Γερμανὸν τὸν πατριάρχην κ. τὴν σύγκλητον . . . ἐγχειρίζει αὐτῷ τὴν βασιλείαν). Nicephorus represents the initiative as coming from the Senate and such leaders of the army as were in the capital: ταῦτα (viz. the successes of Maslema) μαθόντες οἵ τε στρατιωτικοὶ κ. πολιτικοὶ ἄρχοντες κ. τὴν τοῦ Θ. ἀπειρίαν κ. ὡς οὐκ ἱκανῶς ἔχει πρὸς τὰ πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους ἀντικαθίστασθαι, ἐφίστανται αὐτῷ παραινοῦντες τὴν βασιλείαν παραιτήσασθαι κ. ἀβλαβῶς ἰδιωτεῦσαι. And the choice of Leo is made (he seems to suggest) by voting: Εἶτα εἰς ψῆφον ἐληλυθότων τοῦ βασιλεύσοντος (=as to a successor) ἠρέθη Λέων ὁ πατρίκιος. The general impression of the crisis of 716–717 is well represented by the same author a little earlier: Ἐπεὶ οὖν πυκναὶ τῶν βασιλέων ἐπαναστάσεις ἐγένοντο κ. ἡ τύραννις ἐκρατεῖ τά τε τῆς βασιλείας κ. τῆς πόλεως κατημελεῖτο κ. διέπιπτε πράγματα ἔτι μὴν κ. ἡ τῶν λόγων ἠφανίζετο παίδευσις κ. τὰ τακτικὰ διελύετο. Theophanes, too, in his second and better narrative of the rise of Leo III. (where he actually styles the hated Iconoclast ὁ εὐσεβὴς βασιλεύς): Τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων πολιτείας συγκεχυμένης οὔσης ἔκ τε τῆς βαρβάρων ἐπιδρομῆς κ. ἐκ τῶν τοῦ Ἰουστ. μιαιφονιῶν κ. τῶν τοῦ Φιλιππικοῦ ἀνοσιουργιῶν, οὗτος ὁ Λέων ὑπερεμάχει τῷ Ἀρτεμίῳ, ἐναντιούμενος Θεοδοσίῳ. We will leave the Senate humbled and sobered, conscious of the inefficacy of pure civilian rule; the Armeniacs and Anatolics triumphant at their success over the Obsician candidate; and the capital confident in the new ruler. But abroad there is a

Armeniacs and Anatolics upset Obsician influence (716, 717).

Armeniacs and Anatolics upset Obsician influence (716, 717).

general sense of anarchy and growing barbarism; polite letters and official training have disappeared. Even military discipline and the famous skill of Roman tactics has gone; and the work of re-organisation has to be taken in hand afresh by the Isaurian house.

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